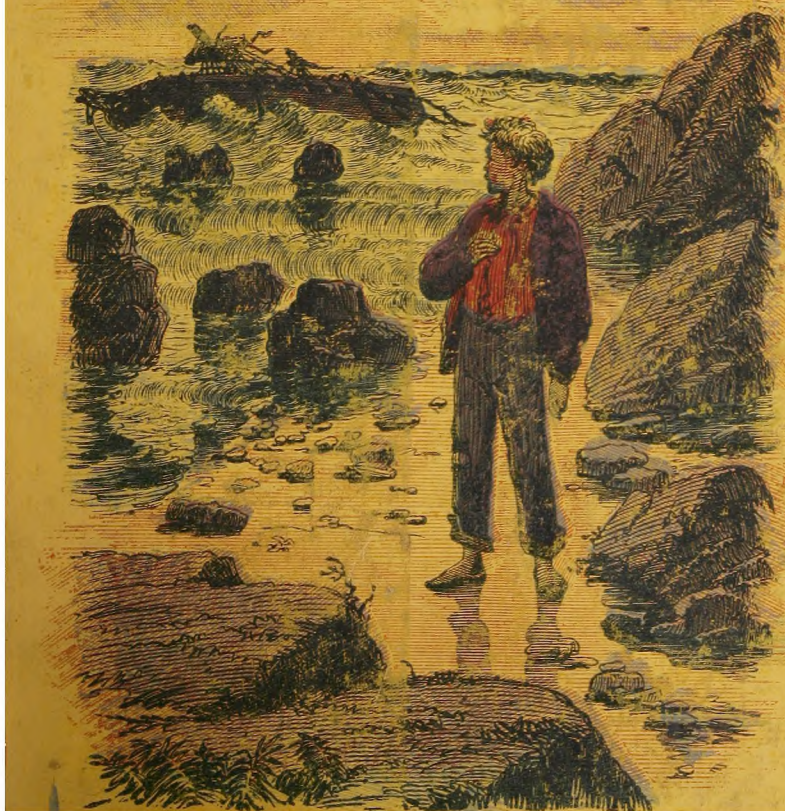


THE
SAILOR CRUSOE

BY
PERCY B. ST. JOHN.



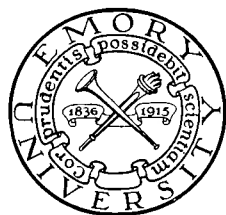


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THE
SAILOR CRUSOE,

BY

PERCY B. ST. JOHN,

AUTHOR OF "THE SNOW SHIP," "THE RED QUEEN," ETC. ETC.

LONDON

J. A. BERGER, 13, CATHERINE ST., STRAND

PREFACE.



I HAVE no excuse to offer for publishing another Tale of the order established by the immortal De Foe, except that, my “ARCTIC CRUSOE” having obtained a most remarkable sale in the Journal in which it originally appeared, in volumes in England and America, and in its French and German garb, a friend suggested another book of a similar character; which, without pretending to originality, will, I trust, prove both amusing and instructive to my young readers.

I fear, however, that many of my earlier friends are young no longer; but I hope their sons and heirs will extend to me the same favour bestowed by their parents upon my boyish labours; for I began, I am sorry to say, to publish when I should have been at school.

PERCY B. ST. JOHN.

February, 1864.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. My First Adventure	7
II. The Island	10
III. My Uncle	13
IV. We Set Sail	15
V. The Storm	20
VI. I am Alone	24
VII. I Try to Make a Fire	27
VIII. How I Tried to Make a Boomerang	30
IX. The Elk and the Mysterious Animal	34
X. Hope	39
XI. The Sandbank	42
XII. A Ship on Fire	46
XIII. A Sea Voyage	49
XIV. The Water Pool	52
XV. A Pleasant Discovery	54
XVI. My Dog Meets with an Adventure	56
XVII. An Awful Day	60
XVIII. A Journey	64
XIX. Another Discovery	66
XX. The Bamboo and the Bread-Fruit Tree	70
XXI. The Voyage Back	75
XXII. Preparations for the Future	82
XXIII. A Wet Season	90
XXIV. The Cannibal Indians	93
XXV. A Night Attack	106
XXVI. The Strange Capture	111
XXVII. The Savage Hunters	119
XXVIII. Memories of the Past	127
XXIX. The Inland Lake	133
XXX. A Mysterious Fire	141
XXXI. The Discovery of Skeletons	145

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXXII. The Fugitive	153
XXXIII. I Become Delirious	162
XXXIV. The Land Tortoise	168
XXXV. Taking a Hyena	172
XXXVI. Taming the Zebra	177
XXXVII. An Ostrich Hunt	182
XXXVIII. Taming a Shrew	189
XXXIX. My Summer House	193
XL. A Midnight Encounter	200
XLI. The Fan Indians	205
XLII. Canoe Travelling	212
XLIII. The Water Trail	219
XLIV. Smoked Out	228
XLV. The Return Trail	232
XLVI. Pablina's Departure	238
XLVII. The Albatross	245
XLVIII. How I Made a Boat	250
XLIX. A Forest on Fire	256
L. I Start from My Island	264
LI. Volcanoes and Water Spouts	269
LII. A Volcanic Island	274
LIII. The Deserted Village	282
LIV. My Second Shipwreck	289
LV. The Laughing Jackass	293
LVI. I Take a Holiday	297
LVII. A Hungry Thief	302
LVIII. A Fight with the Fans	307
LIX. Overwhelming Adventures	315
LX. Our New Establishment	325
LXI. The Adventures of My Family	330
LXII. A Wreck Ashore	337
LXIII. The Abduction	344
LXIV. Buffalo Hunting	350
LXV. The History of Pablina	356
LXVI. The Journey	366
LXVII. Our Family Meeting	374
LXVIII. The Conclusion	379



THE SAILOR CRUSOE.

CHAPTER I.

MY FIRST ADVENTURE.

MY father had been a sailor in his younger days, but having married early in life, he abandoned his original occupation of ploughing the seas, and betook himself to that of tilling the more fertile earth. Another reason for his retirement was, that he had inherited a small estate on the eastern coast, and being a man of simple tastes and domestic habits, it amply sufficed for all his wants.

I was his first-born ; and, though he had many other children, a secret instinct seemed to tell me that I was his favourite. Not that he allowed any undue preference to be seen, but there are little nameless nothings, which reveal the feelings of the heart and betray what even a parent might wish to conceal. I could do what I liked with him.

As he let the larger portion of his land, and kept only a few acres for his own use and amusement, he had a great deal of leisure time upon his hands, and his delight used to be to take me out with him, and, walking along hand in hand, to expound to me, from the treasures of a well-stored mind, such knowledge as suited my age.

He was fond of botany, and would explain to me in simple language the mysteries of this part of creation,—from the properties of the meadow grass, which trembles at the touch of the butterfly and bends before the sweeping wind, to that of the almond tree, with its gradually whitening blossoms, or that choicest flower of the hedge bank—eyebright—“whose gaze is like an infant’s.” He

would point out to me at what season to expect each coming stranger; to know, that in January, when He "scattereth his hoar frost like ashes," we could scarcely expect any visitant save the daisy that never dies, the holly and the mistletoe; how, when in April, God greeteth the earth by the south wind, the hedges are white with blossoms; and so on throughout the year. He explained to me the uses of every tree and plant we saw, a knowledge which served me in after days.

I will here give you one instance of my father's personal character. We had been out since morning. He had brought a book with him, that he might read while I played in the meadows, and culled a bouquet of flowers for my sister Ellen, two years my junior. I had thus strayed away some little distance. The day was warm, the air balmy, and the fragrance of the flowers delicious. The grass twinkled in the sunshine, the daisies opened their round eyes by thousands, the buttercups gleamed in rich profusion.

Suddenly I heard a fearful roar, and turning, I saw at the distance of about a hundred yards, a furious bull coming full tilt at me. I uttered a piercing shriek, and ran. Never, while memory lasts, shall I forget the bounds with which my father came rushing towards me. He seemed advancing to certain destruction, but I am sure he never thought of himself. The savage beast was about ten yards off, when my father caught me by the hand, and, turning, faced the advancing brute. Astonished and confounded, the bull paused, his eyes glared wildly at my father, his feet pawed the ground, his bellowing woke the distant echoes, and then, once more lashing himself into his former fury, he plunged headlong at us.

This was what my father had expected. But it gave him breath. Catching me wildly up he threw me on his back. My arms clung round his throat, while my little heart almost ceased to beat. Away he flew, the bull after him. I am sure no man ever ran so fast before. He rushed towards a hedge; but there seemed no hope. The infuriated beast was close upon us, when my father, rousing all his energies, made a fearful leap, and falling

with me down a slope of some thirty feet, we rolled into the waters of a small trout stream that skirted our house.

We were saved. But my father was ill for weeks, yet he never complained; for I was safe and unhurt.

We lived near the sea, and most of the people in our neighbourhood were fishermen. With the exception of the rector, we had no society, and I, who, boy like, loved to play with those of my own age, spent much of my time with the youths who were, ere long, to man the boats engaged in the fishing trade. Our residence commanded the view of a lovely cove, which I shall call St. Margaret's Bay. Into this secluded spot fell the river which ran past our house.

As it had long been understood that I was to follow in my father's footsteps, and become a tiller of the soil—unless, indeed, I selected a profession—my father raised no objection to my following out my taste for boats and the water. I could swim admirably. This useful art my father had taught me; and, when twelve years old, I could reef, steer, and do all kinds of odd jobs on board a small vessel.

Like most boys, I loved the sea, and had I not known the intense dislike my mother entertained for everything connected with the water, I should have looked forward to the day when I could make long voyages and see strange lands, such as those I read of in my father's library. But I knew that I was expected to succeed my father as the head of the house, and though I often sighed in secret for the free life of a jolly sailor, I kept my aspirations to myself, and never showed any disinclination for the position to which Providence and my parents had appointed me. Nor did I ever, in the course of a long life, regret that, though my faults were great, I was always a good son.

My fondness for water excursions could not, however, pass wholly unnoticed, and dear Ellen, my younger brothers and sisters, and my cousin Polly, often in fun, called me the sailor. Ah me! there is surely a fate in all things, and my case seemed no exception to the rule.

CHAPTER II.

THE ISLAND.

It was my delight both to sail and swim in those vast expanses of water generally called Lakes, but which in our part of the country received the name of "Broads." My father often accompanied me. I was still a delicate boy, and though a good swimmer, I was not fond of going out of my depth. He would, therefore, swim alongside of me, guide me, and, if need be, assist me. I only wish that every boy, in after life, had such happy hours to look back to.

Now it happened that my father had occasion to go to London on important business. James Challoner, an elder brother of his, having emigrated to Virginia, a friendly intercourse was kept up by letter between the families. Every now and then my uncle required goods from England, in exchange for merchandize sent from America, and he always liked his brother Alfred, my father, to transact his business.

He had often wished my father to go out, or to send me, as he himself had no children; but my father's fondness for home and its comforts, and his extreme unwillingness to part with me, made him ever return evasive answers. He would often talk, however, of going to see his brother some day; but the increasing cares of a large family for a long time prevented any serious thoughts on the subject.

Well, as I said, my father had gone up to London. It was during my holidays, and, therefore, I was allowed to do pretty well as I liked. Sometimes I would go out nutting, or picking flowers with my sister Ellen and my cousin Polly. But my favourite pastime was fishing, and this pursuit I followed alone.

Our house was situated in a delightful little valley. It was a kind of cottage, half hidden by jessamine and honeysuckle. Three miles up the river that passed before our door, and fell into St. Margaret's Bay, was one of those broads I have already alluded to. It was eight

miles long by about five wide. I had never failed to obtain a profusion of fish whenever I visited it; so one morning I started early in the hope of a fine day's sport. A friend of mine, who was absent at this time, always allowed me to use his boat, and in this I put off about eight o'clock. It was a splendid morning, though the sky was overcast, and the heat sultry.

Besides my rod and line I had with me a basket of provisions, and a bottle of wine and water, so that I was well provided for the day. No sooner had I reached within a stone's throw of the island, than I cast anchor and began to fish. My endeavours were crowned with success, and about twelve o'clock I adjourned towards the island, with the double view of taking some refreshment, and of seeking shelter against a coming storm that already began to agitate the trees, and move the water into wavy ripples.

The island was about an acre in extent, its borders being skirted by willows, while its interior was partly composed of grass and partly of a thick copse of trees and brambles. Removing all my provisions, and fastening my boat to a tree, I landed. Before I could reach the shelter of the copse, a storm of wind and rain burst upon me, such as I had never before seen. I rushed beneath the arching boughs of a beech tree, some of the branches of which swept the ground. Despite the extreme violence of the storm, the shelter was complete.

The storm was of short duration. Ere half an hour the sky had cleared, the wind had fallen, the grass sparkled with myriad gems, and the feathered choristers of the woods poured forth their joyous song in varied notes. I sallied forth, refreshed and happy. I thought nature had never looked so gloriously lovely. It was now one o'clock, and having strolled about a little, I began to think of returning home, as I had promised sister Ellen and cousin Polly to take them for a walk. I shouldered my rod, collected all my fish in a basket, and made for the landing.

The boat was gone.

I rubbed my eyes in dismay, and was about to examine

the whole of the island shores, when I saw the boat about half a mile off, slowly moving towards the river, which passed my father's house. Like a child I sank upon the wet grass in utter despair.

Not a soul knew my destination. When I started I had not even made up my mind as to where I was going. The broad was rarely frequented, especially at this season of the year, and, to the best of my belief, there was no other boat within some miles. At first I thought of swimming, but a little reflection made me at once abandon this idea. I was two miles from the main land, and I knew that my strength would not suffice for the journey.

Had my father been at home, I should not have felt so uneasy. Not only should I have counted on his strong affection, but on his knowledge of my favourite haunts. Now my deliverance was a work of chance. I had read of men cast away on desert islands—of those who had voluntarily selected such a life, but I never imagined the possibility of *my* being a prisoner on an acre of land in the middle of a Norfolk broad.

I thought of a raft; but I had nothing in my possession in the shape of tools. True, I had a clasp knife, but long before I could cut down branches and boughs stout enough, succour must come. If not, I thought I must surely die; and then when picnic parties visit the island next spring, my bleaching bones may tell the tale?

I shuddered, and drawing my bottle of sherry and water from the basket, took a sip. This revived me a little, and I began to look around. It was quite clear that one night was to be passed in that dreary place; accordingly I began to think of a hut. I saw a quantity of wood there ready for removal. This I decided to use for walls, and, by the exercise of great energy, contrived, in about two hours, to erect something like a cabin, roofed with green boughs.

At the end of this time I was hungry. But my provisions were exhausted. I had, it is true, abundance of raw fish, but I did not even think of that, as the very idea of using it would in all probability have made me ill. There were a few blackberries, and other wild fruit, upon

which I made a kind of meal. Then, exhausted and weary, I crawled into my hut, and was soon in a sound sleep.

It was broad day when I awoke. The birds were singing on every bough, but though their voice was music indeed, it was as the hooting of an owl, compared with that which fell upon my ear next moment. It was my father calling aloud,—

“Alfred! Alfred! My dear boy! Where are you?”

The boat had been found at daybreak by some labourers, who at once went to my father's house, and said they had seen me in it on the previous morning. Filled with awful dread, and thinking that I had been capsized in the storm, he hurried to the broad, pulled frantically to the island which he knew I was in the habit of visiting, and there, unable to restrain his anguish, called my name. His delight may be conceived, nor was that of my mother and sisters less. But when the first excitement wore off, they would often laugh at my adventure, call me the Sailor Crusoe, and insist on a visit to my desert island, which, for many a long day, was one of our favourite haunts.

CHAPTER III.

MY UNCLE.

THE life of a youth in the country, devoted to study and the sports of the field, is not eventful. I went to the school kept by our rector, I assisted my father in his orchard and garden, and became more his companion than ever. Having married when very young, he was not forty when I was eighteen, so that we had many sympathies in common.

His great desire was that I should follow his example, marry and settle down very early in life, an idea which, when I thought of my orphan cousin, Mary Anne, appeared to me a very sensible one. But still I cherished the desire for wandering, and would have bartered a year

or two of my life to make one voyage round the world. But an event occurred which changed the whole current of my existence.

I was, I have said, eighteen years of age, when my father received another most pressing letter from his brother. He was not well; his plantations were now very valuable, and he had no one to look after his interests. His overseers and servants were robbing him frightfully. He could not understand why my father, who had a large family, could not spare one of his children, and that the eldest, to come over and be unto him as a son. However, as he was quite determined and would take no further denial, he was on his way to England, and might arrive almost as soon as his letter. He therefore begged my father to secure a furnished house for himself and a retinue of servants.

At first, my father was all excitement at the idea of seeing a brother who, though always known to him pleasantly by correspondence, was in person quite a stranger. Then I saw a change come over him. If ever man did give up his whole mind to domestic joys—the love of home and his children—it was my father. To take away one from his nest, was to commence that breaking up of home so painful to the parent. And yet I knew that he had made up his mind to the sacrifice. He could not refuse his brother, and he fancied that my worldly prospects were too deeply interested for him to hesitate.

The house was easily found. My father had many friends, who gladly volunteered their services. One obliging offer was accepted. At last my uncle came. He was a man of imperious manner, brusque ways, but noble heart. The meeting between the brothers was most affectionate. I saw that my father would do anything for his elder brother. Uncle James at once fixed upon me, and declared that he would not think of returning to America without me.

Then came a long series of conferences from which I was excluded. At last, my mother was admitted as one of the conclave, and the three sat in council for about a week. My father announced one morning at breakfast-

time, that, having once seen his brother, he could not think of parting from him ; that Uncle James had determined to take Alfred away ; and so, as a compromise, he had agreed to sell his paternal estate, emigrate to Virginia, and settle beside his brother, with all his household. Every face brightened up at this announcement, especially cousin Polly's.

The emigration of so large a family was not the work of a day, and I found that my uncle James had decided to wait. There was the land to dispose of, an outfit to prepare, and other things to be done. All, however, began to prepare for the journey ; though my mother, sisters, and my cousin, Mary Anne, disliked the sea, they were willing to make any sacrifice rather than be separated from me.

It was agreed that we were to sail in October, as my uncle particularly wished to be home at Christmas time, which we understood was made much of in Virginia, almost as much, indeed, as in old England.

I was enraptured. My darling aspirations, my dearest hopes, were about to be realized. I should witness the ocean in its might and grandeur ; and I should see those far-off places of which I had read so much. Every spare moment I could find I read books of travels, narratives of shipwrecks and disasters at sea, while, though almost a man, I would even sometimes steal to my island on the broad, to read "Robinson Crusoe."

CHAPTER IV

WE SET SAIL.

THE name of the vessel we were to sail in, was the barque Reformation, John Thomas, master. It was one Monday morning when, our cargo having been safely stowed, we went on board. There was my father and mother, myself, my sister Ellen, my cousin Polly, and six younger children. There was my uncle James and his household, thus oddly composed : Peter, Jack, London, Cræsus, ne-

groes; Cajoe, a child; Hagar, Bella, Sarah, negresses; and Venus, an Indian girl, whom he had saved from the slaughter when her family was massacred.

About mid-day, the barque, after having been warped to the end of Yarmouth pier, started fairly on its way, and I, while the others gazed with mournful eyes at the receding shore, almost leaped with delight, as I felt the vessel bounding over the waves, and as I feasted my eyes with a sight of the great wilderness of waters.

It was a lovely day. Light fleecy clouds were wafted along the clear blue sky. The waves danced merrily to the warm and genial pressure of the wind, and all nature seemed to smile upon our voyage. But, strange as it may appear, my father, my uncle, and my mother, were very sad. 'Tis hard to tear ourselves away from the home of our affections, at all times; but in my uncle's case, this was not so. He was bound *for* home, and yet his habitual smile rested not on his countenance.

We were at war with France, so that we hastened to join, as soon as possible, a convoy, which had been waiting for a favourable wind, for several days. Our barque, however, was very swift, and tolerably well armed, with a good crew, so that our skipper determined to run the gauntlet of the privateers as soon as he got an opportunity.

As soon as we lost sight of land, my relatives, under pretence of examining their berths, went below, to conceal their agitation; but I, who was in my element, remained on deck. I was delighted at everything; the very singing of the wind, the straining of the cordage, the swearing of the sailors, the creaking of the ship, all seemed to increase my excitement. At last I was on board a real, genuine ship, and bound for a long voyage.

Presently, my father and uncle came on deck. They were calmer now. All the rest were suffering already from the abominable malady which attacks those who have never before left the land. We conversed freely now, and my uncle, becoming eloquent, told us some fine stories of his plantations in Virginia, which sounded all the more real when I looked at the grinning negroes, who formed his favourite attendants, and watched Cajoe

climbing up the rigging like a monkey. That night and the next day it was quite calm, and the convoy got scattered, to the great indignation of the captain of the frigate. Our skipper, however, little heeded his signals, keeping on as long as the tide drove us to the westward, and then anchoring.

About eleven o'clock, it came on to blow. It was one of those sudden squalls, against which no prudence can avail, and, before we could recover ourselves, the ship dragged, the cable snapped, and we lost our anchor.

We were now compelled to run before the wind, which we did for some hours, when seeing two lights, our skipper fancied that we had fallen foul of the French fleet. We accordingly tacked, and stood direct for the English coast, which we made a little after daylight. Then came a kind of tornado off the land, and our master, being on the deck, slipped over a coil of rope and broke his leg, which was a great misfortune, both to him and to us. But my father and uncle, after some little difficulty succeeded in setting it.

The guidance of the barque was now, necessarily, placed in the hands of the chief mate, who was neither so good a seaman, nor so skilful a navigator, as Captain Thomas. Still he was a man who tried to do his duty. But everything was against him. We either had squalls, or baffling winds, or calms for days, so that we made no progress. Every day we expected to fall in with the convoy, but we saw no sail save fishing-smacks, which, doubtful of our character, kept at a respectful distance.

On the 25th of October we made Cape St. Vincent. The mate wished, as much as possible, to run up the coast for the trade winds, but, owing to a contrary wind at north-east, he was compelled to steer at a great distance from the land for several days, until he was quite out of his latitude, and in a region with which he was totally unacquainted. Then we shifted, and ran in for the land for twenty-four hours, when we sounded and found fifty-five fathoms, which again deepened to ninety towards evening, the wind remaining very variable and uncertain.

Both my father and my uncle began to be very uneasy. They were well provisioned, but only for a tolerably successful voyage, and now, through the accident to the captain, and a subsequent fever which attacked him, we were uncertain as to our whereabouts. Now I saw the evil of my not having learned navigation. A very moderate knowledge of that great science would have been invaluable.

On St. Martin's Eve, the 10th of November, the storm augmented in violence, attended by a prodigious swell. When morning broke, it was worse than the night had been, and a sudden shift of wind coming on about mid-day, threw the ship into the trough of the sea, which struck her aft. The rudder broke loose, five of the hinges gave way at the stern, the gudgeons being torn asunder, and the ship, tossed about at the mercy of the wind and waves, was driven to the westward. The pumps were now sounded, and the terrible news announced, that there were four feet of water in the hold.

At this moment our brave and gallant skipper came on deck, and though weak and ill, he exerted himself to the utmost of his power to encourage his crew, who, with great labour and incredible hardship, slung the two long stern ropes to the quarter of the rudder; but it broke loose again, and was dragged three hundred miles after her during the next three days, when, by the utmost efforts, it was once more recovered and made fast.

Still we knew not where we were, and the water increasing, the pumps were rigged, and the negroes and half of the crew put to them, while the other half strove to discover and moderate the leak. After incredible labour, and much heart-sickness, we did discover its position, but it could only be partially moderated, the gangs still working hard at the pumps.

Clouds began to thicken round more than ever, and the whistling of the wind was awful. Another dreadful storm now commenced from the north-east, which, swelling and roaring, was after some hours more violent than at first, and at length seemed to exclude all the light of the heavens, and leave us in utter darkness. The black-

ness of the sky, and the howling of the wind, were such as to inspire the boldest of our men with terror, for the dread of death is the more terrible at sea, as no situation is so entirely destitute of comfort and relief.

Our sails were all close clewed up, as if we only showed a reefed foresail to guide the vessel. Four, and sometimes six men were not enough to steer her, which may partly indicate the strength of the gale, in a manner swelling the sea above the clouds. The rain poured in torrents, and the wind seemed to grow more loud and tumultuous as the sheets of water fell. During the whole of this time the heavens were so overcast, that it was impossible to take an observation, for neither was the sun to be seen by day, nor the stars by night.

Being in spirit one of the crew, I had taken my watch regularly, and so had my father, all the rest of the family remaining below. That night, as we stood on the quarter deck, we observed a little round light, like a tremulous star, streaming along, and sparkling with a blaze, sometimes shooting from shroud to shroud, and appearing as if about to settle on some of the fore-shrouds at half the height of the main-mast. For half the night it kept with us, frequently running along the main-yard to the very end, and then returning; but towards the morning watch we lost sight of it, and knew not which way it had gone.

The superstitious sailors form many presages from this sea-fire, which, nevertheless, is common in all storms. Perhaps it is the same which the Genoese, in the Mediterranean, call *Castor and Pollux*. If only one light appeared, the sailors always considered it an evil omen of a great tempest. The Italians and others, on the Adriatic, call it a sacred body; the Spaniards, *St. Elmo's fire*, and have an authentic and miraculous legend concerning it. Be it what it may, we had other prospects of safety or destruction than its rising and falling. Could it now have enabled us to take an altitude, we should have been disposed to consider it miraculous. But we ran, like men hood-winked, sometimes north-north east, north and by west, then varying two or three points, and even half the compass. We endeavoured, as much

as possible, to steer east and by south, which was not at all easy to do, though the ship was greatly lightened by throwing many articles overboard, and staving many casks of beer, oil, cider, wine, and vinegar. All our ordnance was hove over to the starboard side.

All this time the leakage filling the hold prevented us getting at beer or fresh water, nor could a fire be lighted in the cook's-room to dress any meat, so that we were fain to put up with rain water and hard biscuits. As we all took our turn at the pumps and buckets, this added to our need of proper refreshment. Grief, apprehension, and fatigue, fairly banished sleep from our eyes.

I calculated that the pumps gave four thousand strokes in a watch—about one hundred tuns every hour—making in all about two thousand tuns from Tuesday till Friday. Had we ceased one single moment, we must have sunk.

CHAPTER V.

THE STORM.

Now on this terrible Friday, our rudder got loose once more, and as our vessel was driving with her broadside before the wind, two rudders, of a triangular form, were, by our carpenter's advice, constructed out of masts and spars, to check her course. However, they were soon carried away, and a rudder which they contrived to hang, proved but an indifferent substitute, and was also swept away by the fury of the waves.

On the 27th of November, all on board began to give themselves up for lost. When I went down I always found my mother and brothers, sisters, and cousin Polly in prayer. My uncle would cry, and reproach himself bitterly as being the cause of all our misfortunes. As for myself and my father, we had long since abandoned all idea of seeing land again, and only worked because we felt it to be our duty.

Suddenly, however, the unexpected moderation of the weather, gave us some relief; but now a new difficulty

occurred. Owing to the excessive rain, and the terrible stress of the gale, the sails were so much weakened, that at any attempt to hoist them they successively split asunder. Thus the barque was tossed about, wanting those indispensable portions, sails and a rudder; and now her straining again opened her seams to the admission of such a quantity of water, that, notwithstanding all our efforts, it could scarcely be kept under.

The lead had been cast almost incessantly without finding soundings: however, eighty fathoms water was got in the morning, and one hundred and twenty at night.

On the 4th of December the vessel sank deeper in the sea, from the effect of four successive waves breaking over her. Once such an immense sea broke over us, that it covered the ship from stem to stern, as if with a sheet of water. For a time it actually filled her brim full within, from the hatches up to the spar deck. The force of the water dashed the men from the helm (we had just hung a makeshift rudder), forcing the tiller out of their hands, and on their attempting to recover it, they were dashed from starboard to larboard so violently that it was a wonder they were not killed.

The crew, though half dead with fatigue, and steeped up to the middle in water, excited themselves pumping and baling incessantly. Rather better weather prevailed for the next two days; but the gale freshened on the seventh, and the sea again ran mountains high. Sometimes the vessel rose to the very clouds, and then she descended into deep valleys among the waters, and amidst the darkness reigning around. The lightning darted with most vivid flashes, while the ship heeled so much that the water ran in by the gunwale.

The crew, every moment expecting to be swallowed up, now stood gazing piteously at one another, until the skipper, in the hope that she would right, resolved to cut away the masts, as the only remedy. The men flew to execute this order, and no sooner did the axe cut through a few lanyards, than over went mizen and main mast, a pitch of the vessel throwing them completely overboard without touching the deck. The barque now

laboured less, and the crew occupied themselves during a dark and tempestuous night in clearing away shrouds and riggings.

But now our skipper saw that the leak was gaining on us in such a way that left no hope of our crew being able to keep it under. He, therefore, determined to take to the boats, and this decided on, gave everybody directions to prepare. My mother, sisters, and cousin crawled on deck, presenting a pitiable aspect. But none murmured. When they gazed at the gloomy heavens, when they looked down at the raging waters, they shuddered, but that was all. A great apathy had fallen on their souls.

The boats were the long boat and yawl. The former would hold about twenty, the latter about forty. It was decided that the crew should have the yawl, while we and the negroes should take the long boat. The captain elected to go with us, while his men kept in our track. The skipper knew, from various signs, that we were near land.

It was with awful difficulty that the boats were launched and provisioned in so heavy a sea. Then took place a rush towards the yawl, which in a few minutes was full. The captain had expected this. Now came the task of lowering the children and women into the boat, which was at last effected with great difficulty. I had devoted myself especially to this task, and found myself at last alone on the deck of the wreck with the captain. His leg was weak, and I had to watch my opportunity to aid him in his descent. At length he fell, as it were, into the boat, and, by some extraordinary accident, the painter got loose from the belaying pin. Such was the force of the waves, that in an instant the long boat was a hundred feet away. Still I felt no fear. They were already pulling back, and I at once prepared for action.

I rigged a rope to a yard that still clung to the stump of a mast, and waited. The boat came slowly up. I saw that human strength would never enable them to reach the ship. She rolled and pitched in such a way that precluded the boat from approaching her in safety.

I ran up to the yard. I saw the captain waving his hand to me, I saw my mother gazing wistfully at me, I saw my sister Ellen hiding her face in her hands, I saw my cousin Polly holding out her arms, then swinging myself clear, I made a mad and desperate leap. Down, down, I seemed to go, to some fathomless depth, and then I lost all sense. I suppose I struck out mechanically, for in a few minutes I came to the surface, and gazed wildly around.

I was to leeward of the ship!

In my dive, some current had carried me under the vessel's keel, and I could see no boat. But the barque was easily reached on this side, which showed that, in launching the long boat, we had committed a fatal error. I clambered on deck. I rushed to the other side. Nothing but the raging waters and the pitiless blast!

I fainted. Nor could I ever tell how long I lay insensible. I was suddenly aroused by a fearful shock. The vessel had struck. As I started to my feet, I felt that she floated again, which she did for a few minutes, then ran fast aground.

The wind was still violent, and it was very dark, so that I could see nothing. The sea broke violently over, compelling me to cling to a heavy piece of ordnance. Then I crawled into the captain's cabin, where, with great difficulty, I succeeded in finding a biscuit and some rum, which revived me prodigiously. The vessel did not now strike so often, but several of her timbers were broken, and some planks started.

Presently, day broke, and I saw land at a considerable distance; but soon after, as it grew quite light, I saw that we were upon the shore, lying on the beach, which, at times, as the surge of the sea returned, was dry. A fearful crack suddenly announced that the barque was about to break up, and, without further thought, I waited for a receding wave, jumped into the water, and, running fast, never stopped until I once more found myself on dry land.

I looked around. Nothing met my view but a desolate wilderness, rude basaltic rocks, and sandy hills

covered with scrubby palmetto, the stalks of which were so prickly that there was no walking among them. I was very thirsty, but could see no water. Espying a deep kind of oyster shell lying among some stones, I took it up, and, climbing some rocks, gazed wearily and hopelessly around.

But nothing could I see cheering or pleasant I was on an arid kind of sandy reef, without food or water; *my whole worldly wealth was a clasp knife and a broken oyster shell.*

CHAPTER VI.

I AM ALONE.

SLOWLY I advanced a little further, and then, sitting down upon a rock, gave myself up to painful and miserable reflections. I felt about as desolate as Noah might have done, had all his family perished, and he been left alone on the face of the globe. I could see no hope, no one thing to cheer or revive my drooping spirits. I was either on a bleak spur of some desolate continent, or upon a wretched and deserted island.

As this thought filled my mind I leaped up, and, determined to satisfy myself, I ran along a sort of pathway which led upwards to higher rocks. It was a mere narrow ledge on the side of the cliff, but so desperate was I, that though in places it was scarcely wider than my hand, I clung to occasional projections, or stuck my knife into chinks and holes, until I reached the summit, when I at once knew the extent of my misery.

To my left was a bay nearly land-locked, forming a harbour where a dozen vessels like ours might have ridden in safety. It was surrounded by hills which, after several undulations, rose into conical peaks of naked rock broken everywhere into jagged and rude outlines. I could not see even a creeping plant to relieve the harshness of the scene. Everything around had a bleak and wintry appearance, suited to the weather and time of year.

In front of me the scenery was pleasing to the eye, being bounded on all sides by undulating hills, covered with evergreens. I could also see distant mountains capped with snow, while the nearer hills were covered by a dense mass of beech, willow, birch, and winter bark. These trees were about fifty feet high, and all bent in a north-easterly direction, from the prevalence of sou'-westerly winds,—a common circumstance in that part of the world.

From the lofty position in which I was placed, I could see serious impediments to my communicating with the further part of the land, arising from the mountainous and rocky character of the country, which was intersected by inlets deep and impassable. The soil in some places might be called a quagmire, which I foresaw would render walking difficult. This appeared to prevail on the hills as well as in the valleys, while on some of the plains I could see a black coloured moss, with watery holes between.

Water!—just then a more imperative want than even food. So, having rested my weary limbs, I hurried forward, as fast as I could, to where I saw a pool in the plain below. I reached it after much labour and difficulty, for I had lost my shoes in my plunge from the deck. I stooped down, filled my oyster-shell, and drank greedily. But it was almost as brackish as sea water.

Then I felt as if I had lost all hope, and as a fresh storm of wind and rain began to fall, I crawled back towards the rocks, in the hope of finding some shelter. I had only my trousers and jacket on; I took off the latter, and by dint of patience contrived to catch a few drops to wet my parched lips and throat. After this I began to feel very hungry, and, despite the wind and rain, went forth in search of food.

There were many birds. They flew over the island in great abundance—frigate birds, boobies, and penguins. But they seemed to me very shy, nor had I even a stick with which to knock one down. And then, what rendered it more difficult, they made their nests upon distant sand-banks or reefs, which I could not reach. After

a long and weary search I found some wretched shell fish on the rocks, which, with a little wild sorrel and some berries I saw the birds pick at, made me a scanty meal. Poor as it was, however, it refreshed me much, and reflection returning, my next thought was about a shelter for that night. I had no doubt that the place was infested by wild beasts, against which I had no protection.

Under the big rock, where I had taken refuge, I had noticed some loose stones, so I went back to them, and choosing a spot where there was a natural cavity, not much more than four or five feet square, I began to build a wall in front. In my feeble state this was very tiresome, but at last I succeeded in making a tolerable shelter; though I was very cold, wet, and miserable all night.

Now that the first rage of hunger and thirst was appeased, I began to think of those I had lost—father, mother, brothers, sisters, and cousin, all at one blow. It was a fearful trial, and I wept bitterly.

Then I began to reflect on my own condition. I was on an island. I had no means of leaving, and I knew of no human being within many miles. I was shoeless, and my clothing was very scanty, while I had not the slightest chance of any fresh supply. I was, apparently, entirely dependent on rain for my drink. This was a terrible reflection, for I knew I was in a part of the world where, in certain seasons, not a drop would fall for many months. I was altogether destitute of provisions, nor had I the slightest idea how my life was to be supported. This melancholy prospect drew a second copious flow of tears from my eyes.

About twelve o'clock, hearing strange noises in the distance, I pushed a stone away and peered forth. It was quite dark, but no rain fell. Nothing could be imagined more fearfully solemn, than to have the natural stillness of the night broken by the terrible murmur of the surf beating on the shore, mixed with a violent roaring, of what I afterwards knew to be sea-lions, repeated all around by the echoes of hills and valleys, and blended with the incessant howlings of numberless seals. These,

according to their age, made a hoarser or shriller noise, so that I listened with silent awe. I could almost fancy I heard the tones and outcries of every known species of animal upon earth mixed together.

Then came other strange noises from the hills, which at the time I could not understand. After listening attentively and perceiving that nothing came my way, I went into my hut once more, and with some difficulty slept. When I awoke in the morning I was quite stiff with the cold. But all this time, it must be remembered, that the wind was northerly, a very uncommon thing in those parts. Indeed, I never before or since experienced such a storm, and such a succession of northerly winds. From traversing rocks and stones and sharp broken shells, my feet were so sore that I could not move about, and, as a last resource, I cut up my only shirt, to swathe them in bandages, which did "indifferent well" for a short period.

CHAPTER VII.

I TRY TO MAKE A FIRE.

HAVING prayed fervently, I descended towards the beach, in a direction different from that by which I had come. I found the soil here a mixture of clay, sand, and small pebbles. The sea was tolerably calm, and I was surrounded on all sides by large numbers of birds, albatross and black petrel especially, while I could see shoals of porpoises and seals, and large patches of kelp.

I had managed, by the aid of my precious oyster-shell, to obtain from little cavities in the rocks a scanty supply of water, but this only added to my feeling of hunger, which on this day was, perhaps, the most acute I ever suffered. I could see all around me abundance of provisions, both in the air and in the sea, but they were unavailable, for want of a weapon or hook to take them with. And then, if I had caught any, I had no fuel; nor any means of making a fire.

I suddenly perceived something moving a little ahead of me. Hoping that it might be something eatable, I snatched up a stone, and, crawling behind some jagged rocks, I witnessed a sight which at any other time would have set me laughing. A great crab was moving in its odd, sidelong way, towards a little sandy hillock of stunted grass, where it disturbed a whole colony of small snakes—which make their nests in such places—and catching one before it could escape, walked off with it.

I thought it now time to interfere, and had just raised the stone to cast at it, when a shadow fell between myself and the creeping animal, and a great bird swooping down, took up both crab and snake, and flew away towards the hills ere I could make any effort to prevent myself being so shamefully robbed. I afterwards found that this kind of fishing, on the part of the larger birds, was very common.

I found a piece of drift-wood, with which I made myself a stick, and walking along had peered about into every hole and corner for something to eat. I knew that this part of the world must be very much frequented by turtle, and knowing also that they bury their eggs in the sand, I had thrust my stick into the ground in search of them, but without success.

Then, in the hope of finding some herbs, whereby to appease my hunger, I determined to move inland. I found, as I quitted the beach in a northerly direction, that the country began gradually to rise. First, I found a long, thin grass sparingly scattered. As I proceeded, however, the grass became more luxuriant, and the sandy consistence of the soil seemed to improve into earth capable of being brought to the highest state of cultivation. Clear and pellucid brooks, but all feeling the constant influence of the tide, calmly wound their way along, amidst tufts of shrubs, clustering so thickly along their banks as nearly to conceal their surface. Upon some of these banks I found a kind of wild watercress, and, having no doubt of its salubrity, I ate greedily. It was while thus engaged that I made a remarkable discovery.

Before me lay a bank of soft sand, sloping down to a river or inlet, and on the opposite side was a row of low cliffs. As I sat chewing my very unsatisfactory meal, I observed several birds scratching in the sand, after which, they soared high into the air, and then dropped something out of their beaks upon the stones below; after which they again descended and took it up. An idea flashed across my mind, and half wading, half swimming across the inlet, I watched until the birds again dropped their prey, when rushing forward, I found it to be a hard kind of clam, which, burying itself in the soft sand, is scratched up by the birds and cunningly cracked in the way I have described. I eagerly devoured three of these, though they were not very palatable, and added considerably to my thirst.

There was, however, one matter which tormented me as much as anything, and that was the prospect of having to live upon raw food. I tried for a long time to think of some way of making fire. At last I recollected that some traveller had narrated very minutely how the Indians do it. They take a flat piece of soft wood, and make a small dent in one side of it; they then take a round hard stick, about the size of one's little finger, and sharpening it at one end like a pencil, put that sharp end into the hole or dent of the flat soft piece, and rubbing or twirling the hard piece between the palms of their hands, they drill the soft piece till it smokes and at last takes fire.

I spent a good hour in raking together fuel for a fire, and then following out the above directions to the best of my ability, I sat down and worked hard for quite forty minutes. But whether I was awkward, or the wood damp after the heavy rains, I cannot say, but I had my labour for my pains. Very much disheartened, I returned towards the rocks, and spent the rest of the day in fortifying and enlarging my hut, though I knew very well that life could not be sustained on that part of the island.

I determined, however, to make it my head quarters until I had penetrated farther into the country, and found a place better suited for a habitation. Having

enlarged my wall slightly, I retired within my hut, and began to reflect on my forlorn position, even more seriously than I had done before. I was without fire, I was entirely dependent on the heavens for water, all the inlets and pools being perfect salt-pans. I had no shoes, and my scanty and miserable stock of clothes must soon wear out. The want of my shirt was alone a great deprivation.

I passed a very bad night, the noise of the sea-lions and seals being as loud as on the previous night, while the reports from the hills continued as frequent and inexplicable.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW I TRIED TO MAKE A BOOMERANG.

THE wind still continued northerly, so that when I went into the open air, I felt that I required more clothing. My first thought was for food. I recollected perfectly where I had seen the crab the day before, and went in that direction, casting my eyes eagerly right and left in search of water. Wherever I saw a little pool, with perhaps an eighth of an inch of rain left, I took my oyster shell, and scooping a hole, let it all run in, then drank it, though very far from clean and pure.

At length I reached the spot where I had seen the crab, but could not perceive the slightest trace of one. As I afterwards found, they lay in great abundance, but completely under the rocks where the sea flowed. After much patience and diligent search, I succeeded in capturing one, a small one, which I killed with a stone, and devoured raw. I afterwards found this delicacy in greater perfection, both as to size, flavour, and quantity, than is perhaps to be met with in any other part of the world. But the sea crawfish were best. Their general weight was about eight or nine pounds, and their taste excellent.

All this time the birds flew in abundance over my

head, and I thought, if I could but find some means of killing them, I might at least keep away the pangs of thirst by drinking of their blood, which, though revolting to my feelings, I knew to be the means by which many a castaway had preserved his life. I saw on a kind of rocky ridge out at sea, penguins in countless numbers. I thought it strange, but it must have been their moulting season, for I could see them picking off each other's feathers. But even if I had been able to swim out to them, I had no weapon with which to slay them.

I searched for such a stick as would make a long handle to my knife, to serve as a pike in case I was attacked by wild beasts. At length I saw a stout branch of a tree cast on the shore by the waves, which was too crooked for my purpose; but the sight of it brought to my mind an idea, which I determined at once to carry out.

I had always taken a deep interest in the weapons used by strange tribes, and in none more than in the boomerang, spoken of by early and late navigators. This, I recollected, was a flat stick, three feet long, and two inches wide, by three-quarters of an inch thick, curved or crooked in the centre, forming an obtuse angle. At first sight, it might be taken for a wooden sword, very rudely and clumsily made, and I knew that some of the older travellers had described it as such. It was an implement used both in war and in the chase.

I knew that in the hands of an experienced savage it was a missile very efficient for both, and was made by him to describe some extraordinary curves and movements. It was to be grasped at one end in the right hand, and thrown sickle-wise, either upwards in the air, or downwards so as to strike the ground at some distance from the thrower. In the first case, it was used to fly with a rotatory motion, as its shape would indicate. After ascending to a great height in the air, it would suddenly return, in an elliptical orbit, to a spot near its starting point. The natives used it with great precision to strike objects which lay behind others, and to reach those near, as if by a back stroke, by throwing it at a particular angle.

All this passed through my mind as, with my knife, I was busily engaged in endeavouring to fashion for myself a weapon, with all the enthusiasm of a schoolboy, and the more mature hopes of the man. I recollected that, when I was about eleven years old, my father had made me one, with which we had tried experiments. By throwing it downwards on the ground it rebounded in a straight line, pursuing a ricochet motion until it struck the object at which it was thrown. I had seen birds and rabbits killed with it; but about that time I had a gun given to me, so I thought no more of my curious toy.

The wood I worked upon was hard, and my knife far too precious to be recklessly used; still, the possession of some weapon was so important, that I worked for two hours without intermission, at the end of which time I had fashioned a very rude imitation of the boomerang, and gazed with considerable triumph at my handiwork.

I then looked around for some object on which to try my skill, and, seeing a bird flying at some little distance over my head, I took deliberate aim, and threw my stick. It may readily be expected that, inexperienced as I was, I did not hit the bird. But, as ill luck would have it, I cast the boomerang into the air above the angle of forty-five degrees, which makes it describe its most singular curve. I naturally looked up to see the result of my first shot, but before I knew anything about it the boomerang, whose flight on such occasions is always backward, had struck me a blow on the head, and knocked me senseless to the ground.

When I came to, I was perfectly satisfied as to the form and qualities of my weapon, but determined to defer using it again with such force until I had mastered its peculiar style of flight. The blow I had received was a very severe one, and left a bump on my head as large as a good-sized walnut. But I had other hardships to think of, so made no more of this than bathing my head in the sea, after which I grasped my knife and continued on my way.

A little distance from the sea I found some wild sorrel, and large patches of a plant resembling spinach,

which I ventured to eat, and found it not unpleasant, even raw. Still it only added to the cravings of my stomach for more solid food.

At this place I halted, and, finding a small pool of brackish but clear water, washed my feet, which were very sore and painful. The strips into which my shirt had been cut were almost worn away, and I felt that on the rocks, and in the woods I was rapidly approaching, I should become quite lame if I did not devise some plan by which to protect the soles of my feet.

I cast my eyes around in search of something which might serve, however temporarily, as a substitute for shoes, and at last decided that some pieces of bark, tied with strips of my shirt, might serve until I reached the woods and hills. I could not hope to kill any animal whose skin might serve me as leather, though I often did entertain thoughts of digging pits and covering them with small branches of trees, in the hope of taking goats, hogs, or deer, in which it was probable the island abounded. But I wanted a shovel and every substitute for the purpose, and I was convinced that my hands were insufficient to make cavities deep enough to retain what should fall into it. As for my knife, it was too precious to be used for such a purpose.

I was too much exhausted to continue my journey that day; so looking out with care for a spot likely to suit my purpose, I tore up some handfuls of the wild spinach, and, after much search, found a few limpets with which to stay the cravings of hunger. Then I waded to a small rocky island, and, only protected from the wind by a bank about three feet high, lay down to rest.

Though the wind changed to the southward for some hours, I felt little comfort, for it came from the mountains in sudden gusts that seemed to carry me away. But these squalls seldom lasted more than two or three minutes. About the middle of the night I was alarmed by the rising of the tide; but, rightly judging from the nature of the soil I slept on that it was never overflowed, I composed myself to rest, and, exhausted and wearied, went to sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ELK AND THE MYSTERIOUS ANIMAL.

WHEN I rose in the morning, a mist which hung over the distant hills seemed to promise a slight change in the weather. There was less wind, and I began to hope that I might at last have one fine day to explore my place of exile.

I made a rather heartier meal than usual of small shell-fish and wild sorrel and spinach, but the only water I tasted was what I shook off the leaves of the trees into my hand. The heavy dew which falls in those latitudes afforded me this slight relief. To make myself a substitute for shoes I cut some bark off a tree, and bound it on carefully by means of a few strips of linen. Thus accoutred, I started on my way.

I now determined to direct my course towards the distant hills, which appeared covered by a dense mass of forest. The ground was uneven and rocky, while here and there I encountered deep inlets, which I had to swim, but still the hills appeared farther and farther off.

The morning passed in this manner, and the sun proving warmer than usual, I was fain, shortly after mid-day, to rest myself under a wide spreading tree.

After an hour's rest I continued my journey, and suddenly came upon a most marvellous scene. I appeared to have found the extreme boundary of my part of the territory. It was a picturesque, yet wild landscape. A deep, narrow valley lay at my feet, in many places not less than five hundred feet in depth. A considerable stream was at the bottom, the river sometimes meandering through the narrow vale below, and at others lost among the green shrubs which clothed its banks.

On the side on which I stood the cliffs were nearly perpendicular, rendering all descent impossible. These masses of rocks, some of them from thirty to forty feet long, projected from the side of the ravine, like rudely-shaped horizontal pillars. On the top of some of these

rested other masses of rock, sometimes projecting as if about to fall.

I gazed in admiration, not unmixed with awe, and then I moved slowly along the top of the cliffs, watching the river, which formed a serpentine course from one side of the valley to the other. Fragments of rock thrown together in several places, at once formed a frightful bridge over the ravine, but on my side so rugged and narrow as not to admit of my attempting to cross it. Here, too, I could make out extensive caverns in the narrow vale beneath. But what engaged my chief attention was the water, which I could see, but could not get at.

I could tell by the very trees on the opposite side of the valley, that there I could have enjoyed all the good things of this world; I felt sure that, having a southern aspect, when the stormy weather ceased I should be able to find something like a comfortable shelter, with water and food in abundance. But to cross that frightful ravine was impossible.

I turned away in despair; for, on such a desolate spur of land, and without utensils of any kind, it was only near the sea beach that I could hope to procure food. A small wood lay before me, and this I determined to cross, in the hope of finding some fruit, which might help to sustain life.

Having crossed the thicket, I found myself on a narrow strip of lawn-like grass, and face to face with two animals, such as I had never seen before. They were gently rubbing their heads together, and saw me not. A second glance told me they were buck and doe.

The one next to me was a splendid animal, surpassing all tame deer in appearance; indeed, quite as tall as the shoulders of a horse, and not weighing less than a thousand or twelve hundred pounds. Its neck was very short and strong, which detracted much from the elegant deer-like form of the family; but this formation was necessary to support its enormous palmated horns, which must have weighed from fifty to sixty pounds.

The head was about two feet in length, narrow, and clumsily shaped; the eye was small and sunken; the

ears long, hairy, and assinine ; the neck and withers were surmounted by an enormous mane ; the throat was furnished with long coarse hair ; the body round, compact, and short ; the tail about four inches long ; the legs long, and remarkably clean and firm ; its movements were rather heavy, its shoulders being higher than the croup. It was of a brownish black colour, while its mane was fawn in hue. It was cropping the tops of plants and low bushes, as it could scarcely reach the grass without kneeling.

I could not but admire the animal, whilst I must own that my carnivorous instincts were sorely excited, as I thought how much I should relish a piece for my supper.

Suddenly, a whistling, hissing sound proclaimed that I was discovered. I knew all deer to be by nature timid, but I knew also, that when called upon to defend the doe, they will fight, and are very dangerous.

I darted into the woods, and saw it turn round and rush at me with furious gestures. Then away it sped, with the doe by its side. I watched it with much curiosity. It did not gallop, but shuffled or ambled along, its joints cracking at every step. As it increased its speed its hind legs straddled, to avoid treading on its fore heels, while it tossed its head and shoulders, like a horse about to break from a trot to a gallop. It did not leap, but stepped over any fallen trees that came in its way.

I watched it for some time with considerable interest, and thought it was about to disappear, when I perceived that it had left the doe, and was coming back at a rattling pace, with the nape up, so as to lay the horns horizontally on its back.

There was no undergrowth or bushes in the wood to protect me from the enraged beast. A cold perspiration burst over me, as I at once took to my heels. Soon I heard the strange noise of its joints close behind me. I was going at a fearful pace up an acclivity, which led I knew not whither. All I thought of was escape. I threw away my boomerang, but my knife was stuck in its sheath in my belt. Closer and closer came the sound, and though

I dared not look back, I knew that in another instant I should be gored by the infuriated animal.

At that very moment a terrible chasm seemed to yawn beneath my feet: I was on the edge of a precipice, with another precipice at a short distance on the other side of the chasm; but I had no power to check myself and leap to the farther precipice. I fell into the yawning gulf, felt myself immersed in water, went downwards and downwards, until I lost all feeling of consciousness. When I came to my senses my astonishment may be conceived.

Brief as was the glance I caught of the chasm, I saw that I was not in the place into which I had at first fallen, but in a kind of pit, surrounded by perpendicular rocks, the lowest of which was not less than twenty-five feet high; while in my cold, drenched, and exhausted state, I saw no chance of ever getting out of it. A heavy body of water fell through a gap in the rocks into a pool below, which seethed and boiled, and then escaped in some mysterious manner underneath a large projecting ledge. The water was pure and sweet, so lying down upon the ground, to bring my mouth to a level with the stream, a single draught revived me so much that, selecting one place where it seemed just possible I might climb, I began the ascent. But my feet bled, my hands were torn, my clothes reduced to rags, ere, after an hour's arduous labour, and six different attempts and failures, I succeeded in reaching the summit.

I was so exhausted that I had to lie down for a quarter of an hour, during which time I could distinctly hear the beating of my own heart. Then, rising on my hands and knees, I peered about in search of the terrible animal which had so nearly cost me my life, but which, I made a vow that, if I had to pass my life in that place, I would capture and bend to my uses.

There he was close to me, but saw me not. He stood sentinel over the spot where I had fallen, his horns tossed back, his fore-feet firm in the ground, his little eyes fierce and fixed.

Now I understood the extraordinary nature of my escape. I leaned over the abyss into which I had fallen,

and found that at its bottom was a large pool into which fell a stream. The pool was shaped like a cauldron, while at one side was a hole, through which the water was carried into the pit where I found myself.

I was so sore and wearied that I dared not stir, lest the elk should gore me to death. I knew that I could not run; I therefore placed myself so that I could gain a ledge below in the pit, where he could scarcely follow me.

I watched him all that day, for, from some perverse instinct, the brute would not move. He went a little way and browsed upon the bushes and shrubs, but always returned to his post ere I could make my escape. I knew very well that any attempt to run would be useless, as not only were my feet bare and bleeding, but my limbs stiff and sore.

At length, however, clutching my knife in my teeth, I began to crawl towards a clump of bushes. Night was coming on; and I knew that to remain where I was would be certain death, whereas in a clump of bushes at a little distance, I might have some chance of life.

Scarcely, however, had I gone half the way, when I heard both the cracking of the beast's joints, and the hissing whistle from his thick lips. Fear lendeth strength to the weakest, and, with a cry of anguish, I rose and made for the bushes, utterly helpless and desolate. As I fell headlong into a brake, the animal stopped.

It was evening, which comes on with such rapidity in that region of the globe.

Instead of goring me with his ferocious horns, the deer started back terrified and alarmed. I myself shook as with the palsy—for I felt sure that something terrible must be within the bush to startle the deer. Next minute he pawed the ground with his feet, impatiently turned, ambled off, and was soon lost to sight in the increasing darkness.

I was left helpless and bereft almost of sense, in the wretched shelter afforded by the bushes, while, I felt sure, some creature more terrible than even the elk was at no great distance.

How long I lay half senseless with fatigue and fright, I know not; but about mid-night I was disturbed by the blowing of some animal in my face. I looked up, and despite the black darkness, could make out that a large beast was standing over me.

I started up with a shriek.

CHAPTER X.

HOPE.

BEFORE I could in any way satisfy myself as to the character of the animal which had so affrighted me, it had disappeared in the darkness. Still it could be heard stealthily moving about in the bushes, to my no small terror and discomfiture. In my agony I clutched my knife; and so sore, bruised, and broken-hearted did I feel, that I almost longed for a personal encounter with my enemy, whatever it might be—even if the combat did not end in my favour.

But he came back no more that night, and towards dawn I contrived to obtain a little sleep.

Awaking early and feeling very ill after my fatigue and suffering, I determined to go down to my stone hut and rest, before making another attempt to explore the island in search of shelter, food and water. But the journey was not so easy as I expected. While hunted by the deer, I had taken a direction which led me out of my beaten track, and though knowing very well which way the sea lay, I spent half the day in reaching that part of the shore where I had been wrecked.

My feet were so sore and tender that I was forced to rest frequently, and had it not been for a stick which served to support me, I should not have been able to crawl along.

I approached the rocks, where I had erected the wall against the little cavern by the beach, for I was glad to exchange the ruder ground for the soft sand. Along this I moved slowly, almost convinced in my own mind that

nothing was left for me but to lie down and die. I was much bruised, and knew that days must elapse ere I could again go forth; and that in the meantime I must surely perish from mere starvation.

Walking along and leaning heavily on my staff, I was astonished to find it suddenly sink deep into the sand, and when it was drawn forth, something clammy adhered thereto.

Falling on my hands and knees, I began at once to remove the sand, and soon came to a number of turtle's eggs. One or two were eagerly devoured—which gave me great relief, as they were fresh, and served for both meat and drink. I then collected as many as I could carry, and placed them inside my cave. They were improved by keeping them a short time, for they became thicker and harder, though after all, they were not very savoury food.

In my weak and miserable state it was natural that I should feel timid; so, no sooner were the eggs placed within my hut, than I blocked up the narrow entrance, and lay down to rest.

I have always thought that I must unconsciously have lost a day at this period, for I was slightly delirious, and often insensible. However this may be, on the morning of what I fancied to be the second day, finding myself a little better, and having drunk one of the eggs, I removed the stones which barred my exit, and crawled forth.

The morning was very warm, the sky was clear, and the wind blew balmy and sweet. There had been a heavy shower in the night, but the sun was quickly drying up the little pools which remained on the rocks, and I had only time to get one good drink ere they had disappeared by evaporation. I then selected a position which gave me a view of the sea, and there, my back against a stone, I passed the rest of the day, the tears often gushing down my cheeks as I gazed out upon the vast expanse of waters, in the faint hope of seeing a vessel.

Close beneath me was a small lagoon or pond, and whenever I took my eyes off the far distant horizon, I observed that something seemed to glitter and shine in a

very peculiar manner. At last, my curiosity being greatly excited, I crawled down, and found that the long continuance of northerly winds had choked up this little land-locked bay with kelp, and that what I saw was caused by numerous fish which had been entangled in the weed, and were struggling to escape. I managed to get one or two, with which I made shift for supper, and then the wind rising and showing signs of a fresh storm, I went back to my cavern.

I felt better that night, and, despite the wind and rain, I slept for some hours, when I was suddenly awakened with a feeling of surprise and terror. Some noise, I knew, had startled me rudely from my slumbers, but what it could be I knew not. I listened attentively for some minutes, but could distinguish nothing, save the terrible howling of the tempest.

Then I heard the report of a gun at sea.

To dash down my guardian wall, to sally forth into the open air, and rush to the sea shore, was the work of an instant. There I stood with straining eye-balls, peering out upon the black night which enveloped the ocean. It was pitch dark, and the heavy surf roared upon the beach.

Then I saw a sudden flash, followed by a loud report. It must be some vessel in distress. With what deep anguish of soul did I now regret that I had not discovered the means of making a fire. The vessel was in all probability foundering. Could I but attract her to my island, at all events I might have hoped for companionship.

It is said that solitary confinement for life in a prison is a worse punishment than death, but solitary exile on an island is almost as bad. I heeded not the storm, so wrapped was my soul in the thought of the vessel, which for some time continued to discharge its ordnance. Then it ceased, and I neither saw nor heard more of it that night.

I crept back to my cavern for a short time, but could obtain no more sleep. I thought of the vessel in distress, but I am afraid I thought more of myself. Already I

began to miss the society of my fellow-creatures. What thoughts passed through my mind I cannot say ; I only remember having a confused idea of what might have been done had I found companions,—how we might have built a barque in which to escape, and a thousand other things, equally idle and unsatisfactory.

It was still very stormy when I went out and gazed wistfully on the disturbed waters. But I could see nothing.

I gazed around vacantly, hoping that as the wind fell, I might discover something of the wreck. This reminded me that I had not examined the rocky belt, in front of which my own vessel had been cast away—an omission which I made up my mind to repair at the earliest opportunity.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SANDBANK.

WITH a deep sigh, I turned away to my usual morning avocation of searching for food upon the shore. And thus passed two days, during which time the storm abated and I found myself very much recruited in my general health. On the morning of the third day, I went out to the beach as usual. The sea was much calmer. and I gazed once more with anxiety on the distant horizon. I rubbed my eyes with surprise as I did so.

Something which I had never seen before lay about a mile out to seaward, the waves going over it every now and then with great force. My heart beat violently with varied emotions. Surely this was the wreck of the ship, which I had heard firing guns the other evening. Though I could scarcely hope to find any one alive on board, still I might discover something useful to myself.

I resolved at once, then, to try and make my way to the reef or sandbank, on which the remains of the vessel had struck. But how was I to perform this perilous adventure ? To swim that distance was out of the ques-

tion, and though I might have waded a portion of the way, it would have been madness to run such a risk. I resolved, therefore, to make myself a raft—few and slight as were my materials.

I had noticed that wherever trees grew upon the slope of a hill, they were easily uprooted, as the soil in these places was very shallow. This explained to me the mysterious noises in the hills, which always accompanied high winds; for the tallest trees were torn up and tumbled into the valleys with a tremendous crash.

Accordingly I selected two trees, and with much labour dragged them to the water's edge, having previously lopped off all unnecessary branches. This occupied me one whole day.

Next morning I rose full of hope and excitement, and collecting good stores of withes from a thicket close at hand, bound the trees together, laid over them some boughs, and thus made one of the rudest rafts ever constructed.

But I was buoyed up by mysterious hopes, and did not relax in my exertions until my piece of workmanship was finished. I had placed it at low water in a small lagoon, and when the tide flowed, I had the satisfaction of seeing it float upon a tolerably even keel.

Knowing very well that I should not be able to row this rude boat, I erected a small mast, to which I attached my jacket as a sail, and in this wise, with a broken bough for a rudder, I put off from the island on my desperate enterprise.

The wind was light, the sea was smooth, and fortune seemed to smile upon my undertaking. My raft moved slowly, but proved unmanageable, obeying not the rudder. I could now distinctly see that the object which had excited my curiosity was over a hundred feet in length, and very low in the water. Alas! alas! it was the trunk of a vast tree!

With feelings of bitter disappointment I approached nearer, and found it to be a huge cotton tree. I climbed upon it, after fastening my raft, and found that it must have been years in the water, for it was covered with barnacles, mussels, and oysters.

I could have cried. But I soon regained courage, and collecting a quantity of the shell-fish which adhered to the tree, I made a hearty meal, and then determined to hasten back.

I could walk along the cotton tree as upon the deck of an ordinary vessel; but in my search after food I had left the spot to which my raft was fastened. I now saw that it was afloat in a southerly direction, and distant about a hundred yards!

My folly was at once apparent. I ought to have known the danger of trusting wholly to the withes, which I could tie but imperfectly. What was I to do? There was, indeed, little time for consideration, as the raft was fast moving out to sea.

Without a moment's hesitation I plunged into the water, and made towards the raft.

Scarcely had I got half way when I saw, at no great distance, something moving rapidly through the water, which I at once recognised to be a shark. Every drop of blood in my veins became cold as ice. Wildly I struck out, knowing not which way to go, though still mechanically making for the raft. On came the shark.

I had heard of desperate hand to hand conflicts with this redoubtable animal. I had been told that, with a knife, men had succeeded in defying and destroying this dreaded monster of the deep; but I believe that no one in my position would have felt much relieved by this consideration.

Still, I determined to sell my life dearly. When I saw that the animal was close upon me, I dived with terrific force. To enable me to take a deeper plunge, I had almost leaped out of the water. When I rose to the surface, I could see my fearful assailant in the act of turning. I fled towards the shore, forgetting the raft in my anxiety to escape.

But it was in vain. The huge shovel-nosed shark, as if certain of its prey, moved majestically onward, until it nearly touched me; then it turned. At that moment I touched ground, and bounding on, fell sprawling on a sandbank, the shark grounding itself from the shallow-

ness of the water. I felt pain in my right thigh for hours after, the animal having struck me violently with its head as it rushed on.

I lay panting for some moments ere I rose to my feet, and then found that I was on a huge sandbank, which I had before observed was nearly dry at low water. But I knew that it was now only about half flood, so that, when the tide was full, I might find the water over my head; and if I had strength to swim ashore, I should have to run the gauntlet of all the sharks and alligators in the bay.

I then made a hasty survey of this dreary island, and found that in the middle of the bank the water was not more than six inches deep. Here I sat down to reflect on my wretched position, and saw at once the explanation of the escape of my raft; a current was running to the southward, occasioned most likely by the flood tide. Of course it was hopeless to expect to recover it now, while to swim to the land appeared out of the question; nor had I yet familiarised myself with the idea of a hand to hand conflict with the sharks. And the tide rose steadily, until it was up to my knees. Day was fast declining, but I could see that the water was alive with my enemies.

Nearer and nearer came their ugly snouts, until I expected every minute that they would touch me—and *still the water kept slowly rippling upwards.*

I clutched my knife just as one monster more huge and savage than the others, dashed headlong forward, from a considerable distance, and, by the mere force of impulsion, passed close to me. I struck him with my knife, and the water was red with blood—but what saved me was that he could not swim in so shallow water—and then, Joy! Joy! I could see that the water was receding. At all events, it came no higher, and I knew that I was safe from the sharks.

But what availed that? I was alone on a wretched desert-reef, where I could not hope to obtain the slightest sustenance. I was half naked, cold and exhausted, and surrounded by ferocious monsters of the deep, which,

as if aware that their prey was momentarily escaping from them, made more desperate attempts to reach me, in all which they failed.

And thus the night came on.

CHAPTER XII.

A SHIP ON FIRE.

As soon as darkness fell upon the deep, the wind changed and blew towards the land, while, the tide falling rapidly, I was soon left upon the sandy reef. The only idea which suggested itself to my mind was to scoop a hole in the soft sand, and bury myself therein for the night, and this, as far as I was able, was accomplished. In doing so I was fortunate enough to find a clam, which proved an indifferent sort of supper.

In this shallow hole I lay down, covering myself over with sand as much as possible, and tried to sleep, ere the reflux of the tide forced me to take to my feet again; and in this I partly succeeded. But my dreams deprived my sleep of all refreshing qualities. I was surrounded by horrid faces, I could see fearful things crawling towards me, and in the distance I could hear the voices of monsters roaring with impatience to devour me. Then I awoke with a start, and great dread came upon my soul. I found myself still alone upon the reef.

The water, however, now began to rise, and my whole attention was given to the enemies, which I expected soon to gather round me. For this purpose I selected the highest part of the reef, which was hard, being formed of coral. I could thus see the waters gradually rise, rippling towards my feet with a low murmuring sound, such as we hear inside a large shell.

And slowly the tide still rose towards me.

The night, though calm and unruffled, was very dark. The clouded, starless heavens seemed to portend another storm, in which case my fate seemed certain. Down to the very edge of the black waters hung the pall-like sky,

so that I appeared encircled by a globe of gloom. Suddenly I saw a cavern-like opening in the dreary, heavy sky, down on the very level of the distant horizon. I had often seen the like, and could almost fancy that I felt the hot and furious blast which would soon pour from that quarter. The wind seemed to be lifting the very clouds, and to be bringing with it a faint, ruddy, phosphoric light.

But no—it cannot be—it is a fire!

I bounded to my feet. A fire! Then there must be human beings at no great distance; and could I but build a proper raft, I might hope to escape from my lonely and dreary abode. My heart beat with terrible violence, and I longed for day that I might swim on shore, in defiance of sharks, and devote my whole energies to the engine of my future safety.

The fire grew in dimensions so rapidly that it could not be one made by human hands; it must be the burning of a forest, or the eruption of a volcano. Beginning to fancy that my imagination had deceived me, I closed my eyes for some moments. When I opened them again, I saw at once that the fire was much larger; no, it was much nearer.

It was afloat.

Now I knew what it was that had raised in my mind such futile hopes and dreams. It was a vessel on fire, which, driven by the winds, was being carried in my direction. As it rapidly approached me, I could make out the masts and rigging, which were on fire, while I plainly saw that my hopes of companionship were at an end. The ship was on fire from stem to stern.

I had very little doubt that this was the unfortunate vessel, the heavy ordnance of which I had heard, and been so startled with, a few days before. The wind being directly on the land, the burning mass approached me rapidly. Still I had no great cause for fear, knowing that the reef on which I was, shoaled out to too great a distance for the vessel to approach very near me.

Still on it came, until I could hear the crackling of the flames, the spitting of the pitch and tar, and the continual

hissing sounds, as pieces of burning spars fell into the water. My eyes, ears and every sense fascinated, I scarcely noted now the rising waters, though they reached to my knees.

The burning mass was now about a quarter of a mile from me, and I began seriously to think of swimming towards the land, when it suddenly heeled to port; the flames seemed to start up afresh, and then the vast pile stopped. By the lurid light of the flames, now mingled with black smoke, I saw that it had struck against the cotton tree.

After a few minutes of rocking, the fierce furnace appeared to become more steady; and as it did so, I distinctly heard a cry, so awful, unearthly and thrilling, that I involuntarily clasped my hands, and uttered a silent prayer. Then all was still; and, except that I thought a low moaning reached my ears at intervals, I heard nothing save the roaring of the fast-consuming ship.

When the vessel struck, the masts went by the board, carrying with them the rigging, so that all that now remained was the hull; and this I knew must speedily burn itself out when the water began to overflow the gunwale. But now the quiet night began to wane, and before I was aware of the change, the sun had leaped from behind the eastern hills, and flooded the ocean with its beams. To my surprise and delight I saw at no great distance my raft aground upon the reef. The currents, the ebb and flow, had beaten it about, and the change of wind had brought it back.

I waded to where it stood, without seeing one shark or alligator. They had all made for the neighbourhood of the burning vessel.

To clamber on my raft, to set it adrift and to steer as well as I could towards the burning ship, was the work of a moment. I could see that it was fast aground against the cotton-tree, which, from the fierce action of the heat, was itself beginning to smoulder. Still I made my way as fast as possible towards it, and when close under the lee of the trunk, saw a sight which seemed to freeze my soul with horror.

The starboard bow had been stove in by concussion with the cotton-tree, and the forecastle deck had thus been laid bare. The flames, which had evidently commenced aft, after devouring masts, sails and ropes, had not as yet fastened on the solid beams and planks forward. What I saw was this:—the dead body of a man hung half out of the ship, his clothes all charred and burnt, while a large Newfoundland dog appeared to be savagely devouring it.

But I wronged the faithful animal. Approaching nearer, I saw clearly that he was making frantic efforts to drag his master from the burning ship, and that he had partially succeeded. This instance of devoted affection to his master, even after death, did not surprise me. When the dog saw me he gave a low whine, ran wildly along the trunk of the cotton-tree, and seemed to wish me to come to his assistance.

Then he returned towards the vessel, and, making one mighty effort, he dragged the body off the deck, and dead man and dog rolled headlong into the sea. Then came a rush of sharks, and the dog, again uttering that fearful cry which had so startled me before, swam wildly towards the land.

The sight of sharks tearing his master to pieces proved too much for the poor animal.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SEA VOYAGE.

I SAW clearly, that to approach much nearer to the burning vessel, was to run the risk of being caught in the devouring flames. Still I crept as near as I could, in the hope of making a meal off the oysters and muscles which adhered to the cotton-tree. I was very careful this time as to the fastening of my raft, after which I crept upon the trunk. But it was so fearfully hot that I could scarcely bear it, and I found, as might be expected, nearly all the shell fish scorched. Then I made

a meal of the first cooked food I had tasted for many days.

What would I not have given to be able to carry some fire ashore! But this was out of the question. I had satisfied my hunger, but began again to feel the awful pangs of thirst. I was fain, therefore, to hurry to my raft, and make the best of my way towards the shore; but this proved to be a terrible task.

The tide *set* along the island, for there was no river of any consequence for it to flow up and down, so that, whether it were ebbing or flowing, I was carried to the north or south, and not towards the land. Still, the wind being very much in my favour, I strove with might and main to reach the shore.

My raft was fearfully unmanageable. I could scarcely control its progress at all, and thus I saw myself carried along the island without appearing to approach it. The coast, which had been flat and low, began now to rise, and cliffs approached near to the water's edge. Slightly ahead of me was a promontory, and I fancied, I scarcely knew why, that beyond it I should find a stream.

My thirst was now terrible, but by steeping my hands in the sea, I seemed to cool my whole body, else I should have felt it still more.

Suddenly I seemed drawn by the secret influence of the current right towards the promontory ahead of me; then my raft whirled swiftly round, and I seemed to be actually sucked along by a kind of whirlpool. It was difficult to keep my balance, so fearfully did the raft sway about.

Those only who have endured a long continuance of thirst, and can recall the desire and agitation which the idea alone of springs and brooks have at that time raised in them, can judge of the emotions with which I beheld a large cascade of the most transparent water, that poured itself from a high rock into the sea, at a small distance from the raft.

I saw, however, that my feeble vessel was being drawn into a kind of vortex, the tremendous cascade acting in this way on the falling tide, while the water itself escaped by the undertow.

There was little time for thought. Before me, somewhat to the left, was an arch, probably cut from the solid rock by the action of the waves. Towards this I endeavoured to direct my raft; but I saw that it would not be diverted from its own course, and I was about to leap into the water, when, to my great relief, the rude pole used as a rudder touched the ground. I at once pushed it in the desired direction, passed through the arch, and found myself in a totally different region.

The broken craggy precipices, which looked so unpromising at a distance, I found covered with woods, and everywhere interspersed with the finest valleys, clothed in a most beautiful verdure, and watered by numerous cascades; no valley without its proper rill.

The place looked like a paradise, and involuntarily bending my knee, as I leaped on shore, my next act was to rush to a grove, whose extreme luxuriance appeared to indicate the presence of water. Though the thunder of the cataract still rang in my ears, there was no visible means of approaching that.

About three hundred yards along a slope, itself like a lawn in softness, was the grove. I turned towards it with fire in my veins. There were several shell fish to be seen, but my tongue was swollen, my lips and mouth parched, so that to eat was more painful than the endurance of hunger.

The cliff from which the cascade fell into the sea, trended inland from that spot, and became slightly lower as it advanced towards the interior. A number of parasitical plants, all strange to me, fell in rich abundance from its summit, and when the grove was reached, I saw that they fell in a perfect avalanche over the summit of the trees.

There was one, however, which could not be mistaken. It was the bottle gourd. One of these I clutched with singular joy, and next minute stood enraptured with delight.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WATER POOL.

It was a spot such as I could have conceived our first parents selecting for their bower in the peaceful abode of paradise. Trickling from the rocky cliff, which formed part of the formidable barrier between my part of the island and that which seemed so much more tempting to the view, a small stream filled a basin with clear and pellucid water, that was further shaded by the palm tree, the cocoa tree, and a vast matting of wild vines and other creepers.

I stood still a moment, and was then about to plunge into the cool and pleasant pond, when an odd kind of noise attracted my attention. Looking up, my eyes were fixed upon the strangest beast that ever natural-history or book of travels had brought to my notice. It was a huge kind of baboon, but of so malicious and malignant an aspect, that I was for a moment bereft of sense or motion.

But, whatever may have been the motive or inclination of the beast, he showed no sign of attacking me, so without further hesitation I advanced to the pool and slaked my thirst; nor did ever the most delicate wines that I afterwards made give me the same delight. Then, after scanning the trees carefully and finding that the animal was gone, I sat me down and began seriously to reflect.

The time for repining was past. I was cast away on a desert island, not entirely bereft of resources, but, with limited means, doomed to labour hard for my existence. I had to provide myself with every absolute want of civilized man—a house, arms, various utensils, clothes, a bed of some kind. The cold season of the year, which only lasted while north-west winds prevailed, must soon pass away, and then I should find the necessity for a hut even more pressing, to guard me against the scorching heat and the heavy night dews.

My ambition went so far, at first, as to contemplate the erection of a log hut; but this, on reflection, was

dismissed from my mind, as necessitating at least an axe and saw. Then I thought of a cavern, but though the idea pleased me, yet it also would require many things which I did not possess, to render such a place habitable.

Casting my eyes around to aid my reflections, I noticed, on the other edge of the grove, a small upright palm-tree, and at once determined to make this the foundation-column of my first hut. The pool of pure and cool water decided me on the locality, though I had no idea of wholly abandoning my residence on the sea-shore, as there alone could vessels be seen, or any monument erected to attract attention. And no man who has been left on a desert island, ever lived more firmly in the hope of being taken away than did the poor Sailor Crusoe.

In the grove there were abundance of bushes and small sprouts from larger trees. From those I cut stakes four feet in length and thrust them into the ground about four feet from the palm-tree. From these to the tree I fastened, by means of wooden pegs and tendrils, a number of vine branches, to form a roof, which I covered with leaves and grass by the evening of the third day.

The sight of this, my own handiwork, did wonderfully cheer me, and thoughts came into my mind, that if some few necessaries could be found, I might pass a year or two of my life in that spot without giving way to utter despair.

The third night I slept in my hut undisturbed, though I thought, every now and then, that I could hear a jerking or rustling in the tall trees, that made me rather uneasy. Still the notion came into my head, that no animal could be very dangerous that kept at such a respectful distance.

Tired of living on fruits and berries, I determined in the morning to turn my steps towards the sea-shore, in search of more substantial food. My gourd had been scooped out, and admirably served the purpose of a bottle. So, having filled it with water, I took my way across some very steep rocks in the direction of my cavern in the cliff.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PLEASANT DISCOVERY.

My journey by sea had brought me many miles, so that it was after mid-day ere I reached *False Wild Bay*, as in my fancy the place of my shipwreck was called. The sea was now very calm. Innumerable wild fowl skimmed over its waters, while porpoises disported themselves in the gentle waves in great numbers.

Going down towards the beach, I was fortunate enough to find a small turtle in the act of laying eggs. Quick as thought I rushed between it and the sea and turned it on its back. This is the way the fishermen always do. I immediately cut its throat with my knife, and helped myself to some slices of it.

Whilst engaged in eating I heard a growl close at hand, and turning quickly saw the great Newfoundland dog standing showing his teeth and looking both savage and hungry.

I at once threw a piece of turtle to him, which he devoured eagerly; and, as if reassured, he approached nearer and took pieces from my hand. He then lay down at my feet, and, licking my hand, looked up into my face with an anxious and grateful look, very much as a human being might have done. From that day Tiger—the name I gave him—proved my best and most faithful friend.

Having now my body-guard, I marched along the beach with considerably more courage. Suddenly Tiger ran on ahead to where the waves broke over something heavy. The instinct of the animal was wonderful. It proved to me at once the value of my acquisition. That which the dog had discovered I should have passed unnoticed. It was a great oblong seaman's chest, half buried in the sand.

It was painted, and of unusual size, but so securely fastened that I saw no chance of opening it. Fortunately the tide was falling, so that I had time to make a search ere the chest got afloat. Having found a sharp stone

which I could use as a chisel, I picked up another to serve as a hammer, and began my task. The delight which filled my mind may be conceived when it burst open, and I found it to be the well-filled chest of an officer.

It contained a small bale of cloth, intended for uniforms; a fowling-piece, in its case; several gun-flints; a musket, with the stock off; shoes of various sizes; several pounds of the yellow wax-tapers which are used by the Spaniards; a small case of various instruments; a parcel of socks; some shirts; a few books, in English and French; some knives; scissors; needles and thread; and a whole suit of attire, which, though large, could be made to fit me.

There was a flask of gunpowder, too, and some bullets; also a sword, which, though somewhat heavy, was still a welcome sight.

With what silent rapture did I remove these to the rocks, out of reach of the sea! Not Columbus discovering the new world, not the voyager falling on a diamond mine, could have been more delighted than I was with my treasure.

The chest once empty, it was easily dragged above high-water mark, when I sat me down to recover from my state of pardonable excitement.

Presently, however, I tore off my ragged things with avidity, and proceeded to clothe myself. The treasure appeared to me inexhaustible, as under the influence of such feelings one rarely looks much to the future.

All that I did not require was replaced in the chest, and, from the habit of early days, secured as well as possible. Then it was that I began to realise the full force of the change. My appearance, doubtless, would have excited the risible organs of my own countrymen; but as regarded comfort, there was scarcely anything to find fault with. I had a coat and trowsers much too large, which I intended to alter; I had a sword, the weight of which was almost a burden; and a very heavy gun, but this was a treasure which I clung to with all the more delight, because its use must soon fail me for want of

gunpowder. Walking along by the seaside with my huge companion, on reflection I determined to pass one more night in my cavern, where safety might now reasonably be expected.

The means of making a fire were now in my possession, and I determined to secure one for that night. To collect fuel it was necessary to go somewhat into the interior, but time was of little value to me if my search was rewarded.

Having brought down a goodly supply of dry boughs, I placed them in a heap, and proceeded to make a fire, which I soon succeeded in doing by the aid of a small quantity of gunpowder and one of the musket flints.

But my task did not end there, as I purposed having my first good meal on the island.

I soon cooked the remainder of my turtle steaks and some shell fish, and in a short time a meal was ready, such as an epicure might have enjoyed—so at least it appeared to me, who had been so long obliged to eat that which was repugnant to my feelings.

My dainty repast finished, what remained was given to the dog. Then, having made up a very good fire, and night coming on, I retired to my stone hut, leaving the animal to keep guard outside.

CHAPTER XVI.

MY DOG MEETS WITH AN ADVENTURE.

PERSONS placed in my situation must have their thoughts almost equally divided between the necessities of the moment and the idea of escape. This latter, however, if too much indulged in, tends to weaken the mental and physical energies, by inducing that constant trusting to chance, which is the bane of so many men's lives. I determined, therefore, as much as possible to make my mind up to a long stay in my solitary domain, though hoping and trusting that the hour might eventually come for my release.

Resignation to one's fate is the secret of happiness in every station of life, but in mine most of all. It was necessary, then, to fix on a permanent habitation, which I might prepare against every possible variation of the climate, as well as to ensure secrecy and safety in case my island—as I had made up my mind it was—were ever visited by savages or Indians, or even by lawless buccaneers.

Hitherto no position had presented itself so desirable as that near which I had discovered the pool. It had the advantage of seclusion, as well as of wood and water. A cave, it is true, to my mind would have been infinitely preferable to anything else; but a great deal of time might be lost in the search, and some temporary abode was at all events absolutely necessary.

It would be wearisome to tell the many shifts I was for a long time put to in order to procure food. In future, therefore, I shall only record anything extraordinary in this way. Having breakfasted as well as my means would allow, my steps were turned towards the hills.

The weather since my residence on the island had been extremely unfavourable, but I knew enough of the position in which the island was placed to be aware that a change would soon take place. The home suited to my position must, therefore, be a peculiar one.

Moving with far more celerity than at any time since my residence on the island—thanks to the fortunate discovery of shoes in the sailor's chest—it was not long ere my steps were directed to the mouth of a gully by which I had left the more fertile and pleasant part of the island. My dog kept gambolling around me with delight. Every now and then, however, he would dash off at headlong speed, disappear, and returning after a long absence look up at me with an air of quiet satisfaction, the explanation of which did not occur to me at first. An examination of his mouth, however, elucidated the mystery.

It was red with blood.

He had found some small kind of wild beast.

At once the idea flashed across my mind that I might

train the powerful animal to hunt game for me, as well as for himself. How this plan was carried out will be seen in its proper place.

We had reached the gully, and advanced some little distance up its narrow depths, when Tiger halted, spread out his forefeet, sniffed the air, and then gave a low, prolonged howl. Something, which instinct told him was an enemy, had clearly passed that way. I need not tell how my gun was clutched with convulsive energy as I gazed anxiously around. But as nothing then met my gaze, I again advanced.

I had not proceeded above twenty yards, when Tiger gave another low, savage howl, and without paying any attention to my repeated calls, burst away at a rapid pace. Following him up as quickly as I could, my eyes fell upon a scene which both disheartened and terrified me.

A huge, hairy-looking man, as I at first thought, but in reality a powerful monkey, was busily engaged in destroying the last few remnants of that house which had cost me so much labour and pains to erect. With an activity which was ludicrous, it was taking down poles, stakes, and thatch piecemeal, examining each one thing with avidity, and then casting it disdainfully from its paws.

Suddenly it turned. It had heard the dog. A more hideous monster it is scarcely possible to imagine. I had read of the size, force and ugliness of monkeys, but never did my imagination realise anything like this. Its long, unwieldy arms were waved furiously aloft—and then it flew at the dog.

I fired.

Never since the creation of the world, doubtless, had the sudden explosion of a gun been heard on that spot of earth. The effect was wondrous,—as if the whole island had been shaken to its centre.

The fierce animal, which I was sure I had hit, stood still, silent, amazed, and as if changed into a statue. Then it clapped its hands upon its breast, as if searching for the wound so mysteriously inflicted, after which it gave a howl that sent the terrified dog back several yards in my direction.

But only for a moment. The native courage of his splendid race came to the rescue, and as I was running up, he flew savagely at the monkey, and a desperate conflict ensued. The wounded animal, which was young, fought with his hands, tearing at the dog's throat, and inflicting fearful scratches. Being now very near, my gun was again levelled, and this time with even greater success, for uttering once more its cry, it tore itself away, and with great labour clambered up a tree close at hand, and disappeared in the rich and profuse foliage.

My house was totally destroyed, and the question now arose as to the wisdom and propriety of fixing my habitation in a place which, though affording promise of comfort in other ways, was evidently the resort of dangerous and mischievous animals, which, if they attacked me but once now and then, would soon exhaust my stock of gunpowder in my efforts to destroy them.

For that day, however, there was no help for it but to stay in the place which had been the scene of conflict, and which I denominated Battle Pool. After bathing my dog's neck, and giving him some food, I collected such fruits and berries as I knew were wholesome and nourishing, and made a hearty meal.

While thus engaged, my eyes were cast upwards, and I could see at the summit of lofty trees, the cocoa nut that would have been meat and drink to me, but which I could not make available for my use. Other fruits were hanging from the tall trees, while the circumstance that none were to be seen scattered on the ground was attributable to the presence of the monkey tribe, which cats and devours everything it can find.

After dinner, with much labour and pains a rude hut was erected from the remains of the old one, just to enable me to pass the night. This done, a fire, more for my protection against animals than for the necessities of warmth, was made in front of the hut. Then, without attempting to close up its entrance, I strewed the floor with leaves, and allowing the dog to bask on the ground between my door and the fire, I composed myself to sleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN AWFUL DAY.

I AWOKE next morning with a strange feeling of suffocation. A nightmare appeared to be weighing on my chest. Alarmed, and instinctively clutching the gun, my first thought was that I was attacked by some enemy, which seemed the more probable, as the dog lay still, apparently almost dead, but uttering wild, monotonous and low moans.

Rubbing my eyes, I gazed around. There was no sun, though the morning was certainly far advanced, but a moist and relaxing sultriness pervaded the whole atmosphere, which was oppressive beyond all description. The sides of my miserable hut appeared dripping with unwholesome vapours, everything with which my hands came in contact felt wet and clammy, yet burning. It was a terrible effort to breathe.

I tried to sit up a minute or two, but my nerves utterly unstrung, I cast myself, panting, flushed and terrified, on my withered couch. What could it mean—what could it portend? Was it some great convulsion of nature, or merely the signs of a coming thunderstorm?

Crawling to the mouth of the hut, I found that there was not a breath of air abroad sufficient to fan a feather, and the portentous stillness which prevailed was something indescribably awful. High in the air the birds soared, evidently terrified and alarmed at coming events.

So utter was the sense of weakness which overpowered me, that, creeping to the pool by degrees, a draught of water, though it was tepid, seemed to revive me a little. I stood upright, and, anxious to unravel the mystery, moved to where there was a look out upon the sea. It was glassy, and seemed stagnant. Even the throbbing, which is said never to leave it, was no longer apparent, while a low and unbroken mass of clouds, heavy, dense and immoveable, obscured the heavens, and spread their sullen hue over earth and water.

Night and storm and darkness appeared brooding

over the face of the deep, which every now and then shone with phosphoric brightness.

With an awful crash came the thunder peal, and the whole heavens were lit up by the fierce and lurid flashes of the lightning, which seemed to come from every corner of the heavens, while the big rain fell in dancing torrents that drenched me to the skin. Then again for a moment all was hushed, the same terrible stillness pervading all nature. A dread of I knew not what fell upon my soul. Before, however, I could almost shape into form that which I dreaded, a tremendous crash stunned my every sense. Sky, water, thunder, lightning, rain, all seemed blended into one—and then the sea, just now so still, rushed away from me with a terrible violence, that portended an equally forcible return.

Though the earth trembled, I rushed to the higher ground and cast myself on my knees near my dog, which was stricken and completely overcome. He had never moved all this time, it being well known that animals are, as it were, tamed and subdued by these manifestations of Omnipotent power.

Then occurred before my very eyes a phenomenon which filled me with amaze. The pool beneath the shady trees, one side of which was bounded by the lichen-covered rock, had remained all this time perfectly still; but influenced, doubtless, by the same power which had drawn the sea with such fearful force from its bed, it now began to move, while small air-bubbles rose to the surface.

This alarmed me still more, as it showed me that the earthquake had not subsided. My eyes became, as it were, fascinated, for the water was clearly and distinctly going down; at first slowly, then quickly with a whirlpool motion, as if it had been in a funnel. Then all again was still, and the pool was empty.

The outer edge of the hole was very shallow, while the centre might have been fifteen feet in depth, without any perceptible orifice by which the water escaped. While bent on examining still more carefully the scene of this strange event, I noticed that the evergreens near the rock

shook somewhat, and at a glance I discovered the reason. In case of need, I had brought with me two of the yellow Spanish tapers. Hurrying to my habitation, I revived the fire, lit a candle, and taking my gun, at once went to examine the nature of the hollow, before which the parasitical plants hung in such rich profusion. The entrance was very low, and when the water was in, it could not be more than three feet high.

I listened, but nothing could be heard except the rippling fall of water. The dog rushed past me, and entered first. I followed, when a scene presented itself to me that caused a temporary oblivion of the convulsion of nature which was going on.

It was a cave so admirably proportioned as to appear cut out by human hands. It was about forty feet long, by five and twenty broad, and, as well as I could make out by the little light my candle afforded, it was a good height. The floor was rather rough, while the roof was as usual hung with stalactites in a very curious way. The atmosphere being close, I brought in a bundle of dry leaves and boughs, which I lighted, and thus had a better view of the cavern, which I destined for my headquarters at the very first examination.

I seated myself to rest and reflect; and mechanically examining the small objects lying on the floor, I discovered that *the cave had been inhabited*.

What I found was nothing more than a few roughly-formed tools, such as hatchets and chisels made of shells and hard stones, and which had evidently been once fitted with handles of wood. These, however, had crumbled away, so that the date of the habitation of this cavern must have been remote. I looked about in the shuddering fear of finding human bones scattered in every corner, but in this I was agreeably disappointed. Then came the serious reflection as to the reasons to be given for and against a constant abode in that place.

In the first instance, safety and seclusion were to be considered. I could, doubtless, defend that place against any number of wild savages, or even animals. It had a roof and walls already made, and nothing was required

out a careful division into apartments. Now that I had a sword and gun, with the savage utensils which I had found, I began to be very confident, and to fancy that there was nothing I could not do. In imagination, I saw myself possessed of my parlour, bed-room, store-room and kitchen; whilst wild fancies crossing my teeming brain, I even thought of stables for my domestic cattle,—that were to be!

But then, on the other hand, it was to be considered that, by residing in this gloomy place I was away from the sea, by which alone I could hope to escape. The view from the beach near at hand was bounded by fantastic rocks in the shape of pillars and arches, while I knew that coral islands and reefs lay all around. Then it might, perhaps, prove less healthy than an open air residence.

Between these two views of the question, it was extremely difficult to decide; so having turned the matter over in my mind some time, I at last decided on a middle course. The cave should be my winter and wet season residence and refuge in danger; but another home should be provided elsewhere, to which I could resort in pleasant weather, and when I had nothing to fear.

Just as this decision had been come to, the earth shook, the thunder rolled, the lightning flashed, as it were, right into my cave, and a sulphurous smell appeared to tinge the whole atmosphere. The roof of the cave seemed to totter, stalactites fell from it, and my taper going out I was left in total darkness, except where the embers of my fire faintly glowed.

In great terror lest I should be buried alive under the crumbling mountain, I made towards the entrance, but a gurgling rush of waters warned me to be cautious. Ere the low, narrow entrance was reached, the pool had been refilled, and, overflowing its usual bounds, was up to the level of the archway, leaving me a prisoner.

My dog, however, who cared little for such impediments, dived through, and taking example by him I was soon once more in the light of day, but very much deterred from any attempt to make the interior of a mountain my residence in a country subject to earthquakes.

Several shocks followed, always accompanied by heavy rain and thunder; but the shocks grew weaker towards evening, when, with great labour, a fire was again made. Having first placed my gun within reach to protect myself, I took off my garments one by one, and dried them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A JOURNEY.

A CLEAR blue sky, a calm and balmy wind, a genially warm sun, succeeded to the perilous storm. Still in those latitudes changes were so rapid and sudden, that I could put no faith in the treacherous climate. Many things being needed before any attempt could be made to erect a permanent dwelling, I set out on a journey to Wild False Bay, talking to my dog as I went, for the sake of hearing my own voice.

A secret hope entered my mind, that the upheaving of the sea by the earthquake might have cast on shore some more treasure from the wreck. Behold us, then, armed with gun and sword, and preceded by our valiant body-guard, advancing through that territory which we began with almost a glow of pride to call *ours*.

I had only to imagine myself Adam, cast into a garden, utterly ignorant of the world's ways, and to reflect on all the difficulties he must have endured; how he had to learn to dig, to build houses, to make tools, to distinguish between the good and the bad fruits, and—but this made me melancholy—he had his Eve to keep him company, to advise and console him in his difficulties.

When I arrived at the beach I saw that a great change had taken place. The wreck and the cotton-tree were both covered by water when I was there last, but by the upheaving of the earthquake they were now high and dry, though apparently much further out. The difficulty was to reach the spot even with a raft, to which I was little inclined, as the last dangerous voyage was still fresh in my memory.

Accordingly, turning away my head to avoid temptation, I began searching along the shore, but a few spars were all that rewarded my trouble. These, however, were carefully put aside, being chiefly such things as small stunsail yards, booms and the like, some of which were broken and charred, while others were studded with nails.

Then, like a flash of lightning, an idea entered into my head, which was at once put into execution. Having emptied and upset the seaman's chest, I selected two pieces of wood, which I nailed to the bottom of it.

This done, I cut into strips some of the canvas and thick uniform cloth, and made them into an article, the use of which my patient looker on little suspected.

Having secured the harness as strongly as possible, I passed the collar round Tiger's neck. I then put some goods into the box, and setting the dog an example by pulling hard myself, to my great joy I saw the unwieldy cart move. This was a great triumph, for it showed me that in time something better might be done, while by patience and ingenuity more fitting cattle might be found. Our weary task was not concluded until night-fall. This example of the toil and labour which must be endured ere all my goods could be brought from the shore, set me to think of making a real cart; but after I had wearied my brains for some time, the thought of wheels utterly overcame me, and the idea was put aside as unfeasible.

The large cavalry sword being unwieldy and unsuited to my wants, I determined to fashion it, if possible, into a good and serviceable saw, by means of a file which I found in the case of instruments.

I began the task, then, with a calm determination which surprised even myself. No sooner, however, was the work entered upon than I found it to be by no means pleasant. The file made little impression, and I do verily believe, that of all my trials of patience this was one of the greatest.

Evening after evening was devoted to it when all else had been attended to; but ere it was finished my patience was well-nigh worn out. For many days I visited the

beach with exemplary regularity, collecting everything that had been cast up by the waves, and only hoping that another tempest would wash ashore another lot of treasure.

The wealth of the Indies *I would* have gladly exchanged for a box of carpenter's tools.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANOTHER DISCOVERY.

THE poor dog, after some day's practice, became quite clever at his work, and allowed me to put on the harness without the slightest hesitation. In this way a considerable quantity of materials for my great purpose was collected near the cave, and as no sign of any earthquake occurred for some time, I occasionally visited it, though I did not as yet think of sleeping there.

The water had regained its usual level, though for several days it remained brackish and unpalatable. This, however, was easily obviated, as within the cavern was the cold and pleasant spring which supplied the pool.

The weather was now getting gradually warmer, and I seemed to long for the hour to come for taking up my quarters in this pleasant summer abode. One dread, however, filled my mind, and that was the fear of being attacked by wild beasts or savages; and as it would have been very disagreeable to have been confined to the cavern in case of an incursion of Indians, the idea entered my head of making the approaches to this part of the island very difficult.

I cut such small trees and bushes as seemed of rapid growth, and planting them here, there and everywhere, in less than two months I had made such a little forest as I was sure no one would penetrate in search of a habitation. I left a path which I myself could find, but which I believed no one else could. A further plan of mine was to have a pit at the end of the path, over which

a bridge might be laid in the day-time, but which could be removed at night and a false one substituted. All of which precautions proved useful in time to come.

After the earthquake the weather became very warm, so that I was able to hunt for eggs successfully; but my ambition was to capture a seal or a sea-lion, that I might provide myself with oil; though, as I had no jars to put it in, this was rather a vain wish.

One thing did me some service. Soon after the earthquake, the body of the huge monkey which I had shot fell down from the trees. It was dried up by the heat; and knowing well the value of a scare-crow, I hung it, as it were in chains, on a low tree at some distance. For a long time after no monkeys showed themselves in that neighbourhood.

Knowing the value of practice, I exercised myself every day in running, particularly after goats, and though I could never catch one, still the task grew more easy every month, until at last the goats had to use their utmost speed to escape me.

One day, while chasing one of these animals, my steps led me to the cliffs which skirted that part of the island where my shipwreck took place. Imagine my surprise.

There was the old ship in which I had been wrecked, lifted high and dry between two rocks, at no great distance from the mainland.

I had often heard my father say that all he had read of men lost, cast away, or purposely left on a desert island, convinced him that the first sight of a vessel, even a wreck, is apt to arouse feelings of hope beyond measure, followed by equally deep despair. The thought that now filled my mind was not what I might obtain out of the vessel, but whether there might have been some hope of escape if the barque had floated.

But thoughts of this kind were out of place and foolish. The duty of a man is to adapt himself to circumstances, and mine clearly was to battle for that life which had been hitherto so miraculously preserved. The discovery of the wreck was another link in the chain of mercies, and what wiser than to avail myself of it? The nature

of the cargo was well known to me, and if but a small proportion of it had been preserved, my riches would be incalculable. Whenever I thought of residing permanently on the island, my imagination conjured up images of flocks and herds of domestic cattle, and above all of fertile fields of corn and other grain, though where the seed was to come from was more than I could say.

But what availed me all this store, if I had no means of reaching the ship? To swim was quite possible, but then the sea was so infested with sharks of the very worst species, that I dared not venture.

The conclusion then was, that I must make a raft capable of bearing me, and any plunder of value I might find on board the now long-deserted vessel.

To make a raft which should avail me anything was a matter of serious consideration; but for fear rough weather should arise and put a stop to my aspiration, the labour was undertaken with the energy of mingled hope and despair. The raft must be strong, thick and capable of bearing a heavy weight. To make it on the land was out of the question. My first task, then, was to search the whole beach for four such poles as would make the outer frame of the structure. In this, however, I was only partially successful, and a journey to the hills was rendered necessary. Even then my efforts would have failed but for the extreme thinness of the soil, which, as has been before remarked, enabled me to tear up several pines by their roots, and, aided by my faithful and attached dog, to drag them down to the sea shore.

My sword or saw was of immense use to me, nor could the task have been performed without it. I selected a small lagoon, which communicated with the sea at high water, and when the tide was low I laid my pine trees so as to form a square, intending to place on these a layer of boughs and such wood as the sea cast up. Now it was that I felt the want of a hammer and a good supply of nails, which would have facilitated my work very materially.

To fasten the four trees together, and thus form a

framework, it was necessary to have resort to the abundant crop of creeping plants with which the hills abounded. However, soon after the task was commenced, a circumstance occurred which tended somewhat to lighten my labour.

I have already made several allusions to the immense numbers of seals and sea-lions that frequented this coast. For my part, I was very chary of attacking them, as their power and energy were well known to me. They are harmless under ordinary circumstances, but when fighting for their young they are not only brave but desperate.

They do not walk, but shuffle, yet outstrip a man easily enough. Serpents, it is known, have a progressive motion, which is sometimes sufficiently rapid. They move by bending their bodies from side to side. Seals, on the other hand, move forward by a vertical, not a lateral motion of the spine, something like caterpillars. During the progress of the seal on land, it is never known to use its hind feet, while even its forefeet are not necessarily employed. This appears to arise from a peculiar formation of the spine.

On the third morning, after I had collected a good many materials for my raft, I saw a number of these huge beasts disporting themselves on the rocks and suckling their young, while others were feeding on the grain and plants which grew near the water's edge. It immediately struck me that they would be very useful both for fat and sinews, so I determined to capture at least one.

To shoot them is impossible, for even if you penetrate the skin, the blubber is impermeable. Taking a pole about twelve feet long, I succeeded, after much pains, in fastening to it a clasp knife, somewhat in the shape of a hook. Then watching an opportunity, I crawled towards one seal, which, older or more staid than the others, was looking on without joining in the play. He did not seem to notice me until I was close to him, when, with a dreadful bellowing like that of a bull, he showed his tusks, while the female seals close at hand hid their cubs under their fins. I took careful aim, and knowing the

only vulnerable part of the animal, I struck him on the nose. He uttered a strong, deep cry, and fell on his side, when, with some dexterity, I hit him exactly where the heart lay, after which he moved no more.

The number of uses to which this animal can be put proved afterwards almost endless; but what served me most at first were the sinews and bladder; the oil and fat I left exposed to the air in a hole in the rocks.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BAMBOO AND THE BREAD-FRUIT TREE.

As I approached the hills, upon one of my frequent journeys, my attention was called to a huge mound-like object at some distance, to which I bent my way, little dreaming of the nature of the surprise that awaited me. It was a cluster of gigantic reeds and grasses, some nearly sixty feet in height, and presenting the appearance of an immense sheaf of wheat standing on end. My delight knew no bounds, for I was at once aware that I had discovered the valuable bamboo—the manifold uses of which were familiar to me. Its outer part, in consequence of the quantity of silex which enters into its composition, will strike fire with steel almost as well as a flint; while its canes are split into very thin pieces by the Chinese and made into ropes of six hundred feet long, by which they tow their barges; houses are built of it; nearly every article of domestic furniture is made from it; and it enters into the composition of paper.

As a means of completing my raft, this discovery was of the utmost importance. With my saw and knives I succeeded in cutting down several of the larger bamboos, and having divided them into proper lengths, I dragged them to the beach. I then stuffed the ends full of clay and lard, and laid them across the raft in various directions.

While at work in the bamboo grove my eyes were one day cast towards certain of these patches of cultivated

ground which were scattered over the surface of the otherwise barren plain. My botanical studies made me scan every leaf and plant minutely, always hoping to find something useful or agreeable. My mind ran continually on tobacco, for though smoking was a habit I had not yet acquired, still the sense of loneliness which habitually pervaded my whole spirit made me long to use the pipe.

Halting in the afternoon to refresh myself, I sat down beneath a tree which attracted my particular notice. It was about forty feet high, and fifteen inches in diameter; the bark was ash coloured, full of little chinks and covered with small knobs. Cutting a small portion of it, I found the inner bark fibrous, while the wood was smooth, soft and of a yellow colour. But what I chiefly noted was the fruit. It was about nine inches long, heart-shaped, of a green colour, while the pulp was yellow and juicy.

About twelve feet above where I sat, the branches came out almost horizontally, becoming smaller as they neared the top. Placing one of the bamboos firmly against the tree, by great efforts I was able to reach to the first branch, and chopped it off with my sword. A suspicion which had entered my mind was at once realised: it was the wondrous bread-fruit tree.

This was a greater discovery than would have been a mine of gold, it being in some countries the sole support of the people; its fruit serving for food, its fibres making clothes, its wood being used for building houses and making boats; its male flower used for tinder, its leaves for table cloths, and the viscid milky juice of the young tree for bird lime. I collected a good supply of the fruit, intending to partake of it for supper, and on being roasted until the outside was charred, I found it to have a consistency not very unlike wheaten bread, the taste being between that and roasted chesnuts. It was for sometime a great comfort to me, two or three trees being a sufficient supply for one man for a year.

Thinking gratefully over these wonderful and fortunate discoveries, my arduous task was much lightened. Such interpositions of Providence appeared to me little short

of miraculous. Cast on a desert island without a friend in the wide world, save Him who is the friend of all—food, clothing, arms seemed as it were to start up at my very feet, and all the materials for building a kind of bridge to the wreck seemed equally to come in my way.

My raft was now far advanced towards completion. It was an ugly, awkward and unwieldy construction at best, still, such as it was, I resolved to adventure myself upon it. A thin bamboo served as a kind of mast, while two others fastened to the side were to take the place of oars. And thus I started at the turn of the tide on my not unperilous journey.

The ship lay, as far as I could judge, about a mile and a half from the shore; and, from the way in which the long and lazy waves broke over it, I could make out that it was on a shoal of rock and shingle extending along the land. To reach the wreck I had to pursue a very tortuous course amid lagoons, now bordered with rock, now with coral. My unfortunate raft was, moreover, exceedingly unmanageable; at one time it would sheer to the right, then to the left, and at last turning right round as on a pivot, would leave me unable to guide it for some moments. I had the greatest difficulty in the world to keep my own equilibrium. Still I was determined to persevere, and steered the raft along as well as I was able, though several times it grounded; there was nothing for me then but to wade into the water, and thrust it off by main force.

Presently the raft passed out into the open sea and became more manageable. The wind and current were both in its favour, but it required the greatest nicety to prevent my being driven out beyond the vessel, though it is probable that had this occurred, the shoal or reef would have brought me up. When not more than twenty yards from the wreck the raft grated, swung, and in a moment would have been fast; but being quickly lightened both of myself and dog, it floated again, and was quickly drawn alongside the barque. The very rope by which I had swung in my leap for life, was hanging there yet, and to it I attached the mast of my raft.

The vessel lay on its side, knocked in here and there, and was beginning to exhibit tokens of breaking up. With difficulty the deck was reached by myself and the dog, and heaven knows what were the sensations that came over me, when I once more trod those planks which had been the scene of so many happy days as well as of fearful and terrible trials. It was evident that any expectations I might have entertained of great advantage were out of the question; the tremendous force of the tossing waves had pretty well swept the deck, though here and there pieces of broken wood lay by the lee-gunwale. A top-gallant studding-sail boom attracted my notice, and was speedily hove overboard.

My first visit was to the chief cabin. Stifling as much as possible those emotions which were natural in my situation, I determined to give myself wholly to action. There was ample time, for the tide still wanted three hours of ebb, and it would be hopeless to move the raft landward until the flood commenced. The steward's pantry and cabin lying invitingly open, an examination of it was commenced, resulting in a discovery of some value. There was a small cask of brandy, which, as a medicine and cordial, was hailed with delight; about fifteen pounds of bacon; a piece of scarlet cloth; twenty yards of coarse linen; a few damaged towels and table-cloths; some small ropes, and a locker, with the hasp well fastened, containing broken biscuit. Of this both myself and dog made a meal, though it was mouldy and much injured by mites.

All this plunder having been gradually taken on deck, I asked myself "how is the raft to be loaded?" As my freight would be precious, it behoved me to be very careful. Looking warily around upon the horizon, it struck me that I might venture to pass a night on board, and this resolve being speedily come to, my task commenced. Having found the carpenter's chest of tools, I broke into the hold, and knocked into pieces a number of empty boxes; and with the timber obtained from these I proceeded to board over the whole surface of the raft, which made it stronger and more secure. Then the best planks

that could be found were selected and nailed firmly round the sides of the raft, instead of bulwarks, which, for further security, were bound round with a long coil of rope.

Being weary and exhausted, I took a glass of brandy and some more biscuit, after which my task was again pursued. Only two water casks and some small run casks had withstood the knocking about in the hold. These I placed on the raft.

After putting on board all that was found in the steward's pantry, I stripped the carpenter's chest, which gave me a crowbar, several axes, three hammers, a moderate sized saw, a plane and augur, some chisels, files and a bag of nails. My attention was next directed to the captain's cabin; but here disappointment awaited me; for, except some money, a quadrant, compass and telescope, my search was not rewarded. All that was found, however, was put on board, as well as a pair of large pistols which lay rusting in a locker.

Then came the store-room, which was fastened inside by a barrel rolling against it. When the door was broken open, a sight presented itself most mortifying to my feelings. Bottles of wine, jars of pickles, pots of confectionery—all the little luxuries provided more especially for the women and children—were broken and strewn on the ground. But some barrels containing flour, split peas, and grain for the fowls, were untouched, which I continued carrying to the raft, until the sudden approach of night induced me to cease from my labours.

An old-fashioned, half-broken lamp, with very little wick, and a small jar of oil, was the result of an examination of a cupboard in the steward's pantry. A flint and steel, with some tinder, enabled me to procure a light, after which I had again recourse to my bread and brandy. But there was no time for idleness. No sooner had a slight repose removed something of the feeling of fatigue, than I took up my lamp and continued my search. My uncle, whose estate was on the extreme borders of Virginia, had provided a goodly case of arms, with much ammunition, and on this prize my mind had been intent

for some time. I knew they had been secreted in a second side store-room, the door of which I easily broke open. A dozen muskets, some very portable barrels of gunpowder, numerous bags of shot, and some rolls of lead, rewarded my search and filled my mind with intense delight. But what did not less please me, were some rakes, hoes and reaping hooks, which I secured, as well as a wheelbarrow taken out as a model.

Loading a couple of muskets, and praying for guardianship and protection through that night, I now lay down in the chief cabin to rest, with my dog at my feet. But I slept little. The thought of all my riches, the reflection as to the perils that were to be passed through before I could really call them my own, kept me restless and uneasy, while every puff of wind that reached my ears carried a sharp pang to my heart. Those mysterious noises which always seem to precede the breaking up of an old vessel, could be heard throughout the barque, and several times I crept on deck under the impression that some one else had come on board. But the dog not sharing my uneasiness, towards midnight slumber fell upon me.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE VOYAGE BACK.

It was a still and lovely morn. The tide was nearly out. The raft was aground from its own weight and that of its cargo. Still, as the water rose and fell six or seven feet, this caused me no uneasiness, but rather urged me to proceed. The raft was now so laden that I found its upper surface almost level with the water. To guard against submersion, I passed under the bottom of my unwieldy conveyance the top-gallant studding sail boom, and such other spars as could be found, which being lashed with ropes seemed to strengthen it much.

The wind was now favourable, and having attached the scarlet cloth to the masthead, and fixed one of the largest tablecloths as a sail, I pushed off, with a heart full of

fear, doubt and anxiety. My rudder consisted of one of the bottom boards of an old boat, fixed as securely as possible by means of rope. Almost my sole dependence was on this and on a spar which I used to pole the raft off the shoal, my feet pressing the rudder.

Despite a favourable wind and tide, it did not seem to move, except when it was being poled. Speedily, however, the water was too deep for this to be practicable, while my terrors were more than ever excited on finding that my cargo was not evenly distributed, and the raft threatened every moment to capsize. At last, however, everything was more properly balanced, and my mind rendered a little easier by observing that the raft was level.

The expanse of open water between the ship and the first reefs and lagoons was not more than half a mile, and yet it took the whole of that tide to reach this first stage in my journey.

The utmost care and precision were required to secure a fit port for the raft, which, however, being obtained more by good fortune than anything else, the receding water left my vessel high and dry in a narrow and sinuous channel.

In the holes left by the receding tide were several shellfish, but not of such size as to be worth eating. Suddenly, however, in a clear pool my eyes lighted upon a bunch of something, the shape of which appeared to me to be very familiar. I ran towards it, and was not a little pleased to discover that it was a whole bed of rock oysters.

This was a delightful discovery, and enabled me to pass away the time more agreeably than otherwise would have been the case.

At length, however, the evening approached, and with it a change of wind. My sail was hoisted, my rudder fixed amidships, and my pole brought into requisition to keep the raft off rocks and shoals. The breeze being stiffish and favourable, I hoped to reach the shore, and made up my mind to navigate even in the dark to attain the desired end.

Presently an open, clear and deep channel presented

itself, up which I guided my frail raft with all the ease imaginable; nor did any misadventure occur for half an hour, when the raft struck violently, heeled to port, sent the cargo all to one side, and pitched me head foremost on the top of it. Struggling to regain my equilibrium, I gazed wildly around, expecting that my precious cargo was totally wrecked. But not so. The raft was aground in a kind of bay, with no issue on the land side. But I knew the tide was not up, so trimming the steward's lantern and lighting it, I hastened to repair the damage. But though I had really lost nothing, the reef was too high, and the tide even when at full flood did not float my precious cargo. There was nothing for it but to pass the night in that spot.

But just as the tide began to fall, I bethought me of the wheelbarrow, and as the moon shone brightly, I made up my mind not to rest, but to work. The wheelbarrow was got out, and loaded with such a burden as suited my strength. Then with hope considerably revived, I began to make my way towards the shore, over reefs, by rocks, through pools, but not in water above my ankle.

In this way, working as it were for life, the guns, powder, lead and such heavy things, were about mid-day landed from the raft, which at the first tide then floated, and was brought into a safe dock. Still the task of unloading continued until not a thing remained on board, which, considering the greediness I had shown in overloading the raft, was more than I deserved.

That night's rest in my store hut was sweet indeed, though early morn saw me again moving. It was to my cave that all my treasures were to be taken, nor did I feel happy or safe until they were all beneath its welcome shelter.

My dog, well fed, attached to me, and extremely powerful, was not to remain an idle spectator of those labours which were to procure us a home in the wet and dreary season, and a fortress in the hour of danger. The possession of so many guns and so much ammunition had excited ambitious thoughts, nor did it seem to me impossible to hold my own against a whole

host of painted and half-naked savages, if attacked by them.

It did not, however, enter into my calculations to dwell as a permanency in the cavern, and for a very long time my brain was racked as to how I should connect the inner residence with that more airy and summer one which I wished to form outside. Leaving this, however, to the future, my principal occupation consisted in dragging up on a sledge, and in the barrow, all such treasure as the visit to the ship had afforded me.

My experience of the raft had decided me against ever using any such ponderous means of transport again, and when, after a brief but rather severe gale, I did once more perform the journey, it was with a light raft made entirely of hollowed bamboos. The other being quite useless, was taken to pieces and transported to Battle-pool for building materials.

With the planks and bamboos, a shed was easily constructed, by means of which to shelter my wealth, and after ten days of arduous labour they were all safely housed.

Not to lose any of the fine weather, another voyage was made to the wreck. The light kind of conveyance now constructed was simply calculated to convey my own person. Two very long bamboos were lashed together at the end, while a plank was placed in the middle to keep the little poles apart at a distance of five feet. Other reeds and planks, laid transversely, made an easily managed raft, which I guided along by the aid of a pole.

In this way the vessel was easily reached, and my labour resumed. With the heaviest axe of those found in the carpenter's chest, planks, beams, and everything which might be useful, were cut away and consigned to the mercies of the flood tide, which daily took them ashore, after which they were drawn up above high-water mark.

An hour or two a day were employed in procuring food, and one day having the good fortune to shoot a young goat-like animal, something of the nature of the Swiss chamois, I determined to have a new style of meal.

The compass box was quite new and of brass ; so taking out the interior, the box was used for several days to boil water in, then being well scoured with sand and made clean and bright, a portion of the kid's flesh was boiled therein with some salt bacon. Few "who live at home at ease" could have any idea of the pleasure which this new event caused. It was a meal that seemed homely and redolent of England, especially when, along with my bread-fruit, some wild beans and celery proved a welcome addition. My dog enjoyed the bones as well as the coarser pieces which I afterwards boiled for him, not wishing to habituate him to raw food.

Now that I saw how quickly the stakes which I had planted were taking root, I determined to build a kind of verandah in front of my cave, beneath which I might sleep in hot and close weather.

But it seemed to me that for the proper sheltering of my goods, it was more important to attend to my interior store-room ; so, in the first instance, by means of the crowbar I enlarged and made higher the entrance to the cave, the stone at the mouth being of a soft nature. Then dragging some spars to the edge, I laid them across the pool, and by means of transverse bamboos, withes, shrubs and earth, I soon made a bridge, which was not more than ten feet in length.

Then I marched into the cavern in state, taking with me my dog, and having a gun on my shoulder, while my belt was adorned with the pistols found on board the wreck.

A lantern, a couple of candles, and some resinous boughs and branches, tied together and placed at intervals in the rocky fissures of the cave, illumined its interior with a dim and vague resplendence. The grot was arrayed with torchlight, and its self-born canopy could be just seen, hanging in icicle-like particles above my head. It was, no doubt, an arch upreared by nature's architect, and was by me prized even more than a temple fashioned by the hand of man ; for was it not home, shelter, fortress, church, in one ?

Through the middle, following a narrow kind of crevice,

flowed the tiny stream that supplied the pool, and having long since made up my mind to utilize this in the interior, by means of a trough or tub, I advanced, torch in hand, to where it trickled from the rock. The interior of the cave was at this end rough and jagged. The water fell from a height of about fifteen feet, but as I raised my torch on high to examine its position, I saw that under the fall was a hole about five feet high, and two feet wide, which was evidently the entrance to another cavern.

Struck with surprise and wonder, I determined at once to visit it. I was armed, my gun was loaded, and, therefore, I was a tolerable match for any wild beasts that might presume to attack me.

Several of the animals which roam at night are apt to secrete themselves in the day-time in holes in the rocks, or in the deep impenetrable shades of the forest, so that my caution was a reasonable one.

After a little examination of the rough rocks, stepping places were found, and crawling quickly up, my entrance was made good, without wetting either my torch or my gun. No sooner, however, was I inside than the sight of my torch seemed to excite the astonishment and annoyance of a vast community of vampire bats, which fluttered around my light, and threatened every moment to involve me in total darkness, while the flapping of their wings filled the cavern with a heavy kind of roar, like very distant thunder.

Presently one or two, more blinded than the others, flew right in my face, dashing down the lantern, thus leaving me in black obscurity. My alarm at first was ludicrous, considering the character of the animals; but a moment after, I saw that at no great distance the cave was lit up from the outside; therefore, advancing rapidly to where fissures from above admitted the welcome rays, the vampires presently ceased to annoy me. The stupendous nature of this cave now became apparent, extending as it probably did into the very heart of the mountains.

The thought struck me that, perhaps, in this way the

other part of the island or continent might be reached, and so I determined to persevere. I suppose we had advanced about one hundred yards or so, in an ascending direction, when I came to a clear pool of water that disappeared on my left, and doubtless was the source of the stream that trickled at the cavern's mouth.

Across the pool was evidently a cavern, but quite dark, and singularly damp and gloomy-looking. My dog here hung back, nor did he try to cross the water, but peered over the pool with the air of one who supposed that all kinds of wild beasts and snakes might be beyond, nor was I myself without dread that such might be the case. Without being in any way a coward, a man may readily hesitate before he plunges into unknown regions enveloped in utter darkness.

While reflecting on the desirableness of returning for another torch and my lantern, my dog crouched at my feet, setting up such a piteous howling and moaning as made my very hair stand on end, knowing well that the faithful animal would not do so for any slight cause.

The ears were laid low, the nostrils dilated, the mouth rested on the forepaws, the eyes stood out from the head, while the tongue hung out as if parched from excessive thirst. Then the dog rose to his feet, fascinated, blinded, utterly helpless to resist some fearful attraction.

I could see nothing.

At length, peering with agonized awe and dread into the darkness beyond, methought I could see within the inner cavern two bright spots, as of hot coals, savagely gleaming at the dog. Without hesitation, without reflecting on the consequences which might ensue, I levelled my gun at the two shining spots and fired both barrels.

Never shall I forget what then followed! The report of the gun appeared to deafen me for a moment, but my eyes never closed. I saw bounding across the pool an animal—heavens! a snake—not ten, not twenty, not thirty, but fifty feet long at least, which, with a horrible hiss, seemed to uncoil its huge folds preparatory to our utter destruction. It was the most awful I had ever seen. Its mouth appeared large enough to swallow me; its tongue

jolled out in a hideous and threatening way; its eyes sparkled with mingled rage and terror.

For a moment I was as if turned to stone.

CHAPTER XXII.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

I DROPPED my gun, and would have fled amid the confusion, but the sight of the monster, the feeling of its slimy body as it glided past me, the awful din and uproar caused by the shot, and the terrified flapping of the bats, restrained me for some minutes; and poor Tiger lay crouching in a corner. Then, panic-stricken, we both fled; nor will the remembrance of the delight with which I greeted the light of day ever be effaced from my mind. It was like awaking from death to life; nor would I at that moment have re-entered the cavern for any temptation that could have been offered.

There was only one source of comfort. The snake, huge, hideous and irresistible as it was, had evidently been quite as much terrified as myself, and was probably a long way off by this time. Still, to know that the island was peopled by such creatures was terrible enough, for against the attacks of serpents no kind of prudence could guard. I was not then aware that even the largest snake will never attack man, except as a last extremity, when it is furious with hunger.

By-and-by, however, I began to think more calmly, and the reflection then crossed my mind that, for some time at all events, the cave would be free from the visits of the python. Taking, therefore, a good sip of brandy and water to give me courage, and loading two guns, I re-entered the cavern, and with fear and trembling again examined the entrance to the inner division. I soon made up my mind to close it; and procuring stakes, bamboos, and planks, after some hours of assiduous labour, the hole was blocked up so effectually that few animals could make their way through it.

Then, again, I went into the open air.

How little I slept that night may readily be imagined. I often started with sudden affright—a kind of nightmare oppressed me. But by degrees my mind grew calmer, and by the morning I had recovered something of my usual serenity.

My first duty was to complete the removal of all my goods into the cavern, which I did without delay. Then came another task. During my visits to the sea-shore, I frequently noticed, chiefly from watching my dog, the recurrence of the footsteps of different animals, some of a size and nature sufficiently alarming. Now my thicket was advancing in size and extent, but the pathway which I left for myself would afford passage for all kinds of animals, so that some other safeguard was necessary.

Accordingly, for one hour every day after breakfast, I devoted all my energies to digging a pit at the end of my pathway on my own side, deep enough to render the escape of almost any animal impossible. It occupied some time, but when finished it was a perfect pit-fall. A few bamboos and boughs were spread over the top, then grass and a shallow sprinkling of earth.

But all this time, many hours every day were spent in collecting a supply of provisions to enable me to devote myself to the great task of making my house comfortable and habitable. The bread-fruit tree was visited and the ripe fruit stored up, but in my situation what was chiefly desirable was dried meat. Having killed one or two animals of the goat species, I consumed a portion of them fresh, but the rest I managed to dry in the pungent smoke of certain boughs, which certainly preserved it, though it did not improve the flavour.

Another care filled my mind. I had a goodly collection of dried peas, barley, oats and other things the nature of which I did not fully understand, but I was anxious to make a trial of their character. To dig up such a field as would serve my purpose, would have taken far more time than was at my disposal, but in my perigrinations an idea had struck me, which I afterwards carried out.

Between two islands of timber, at no great distance from my cave, was a small level plot of ground that might have been described as a prairie. On examination, I found that the soil was a rich loam, without a stone over its whole surface. It was covered with a luxuriant crop of grasses and flowers, which were now dry and withered by the heat. One day, when I required amusement rather than work, my plan was carried out. I had now no difficulty in making a fire, and the welcome discovery of some dry fungi, resembling mushrooms, provided me with an ample supply of tinder.

I then placed a line of dry leaves and twigs along the narrow end of the prairie, which was in the shape of a triangle, and I set the whole on fire. Before many minutes a feeling of regret and alarm filled my mind as to what I had done, the grass blazing up so furiously as to fill the atmosphere with a dense volume of black and acrid smoke, which canopied the heavens, while lurid and crackling flames arose on all sides.

Up rose, with loud and shrill cries, a number of birds that had probably made their nests in the grass, and I could see, through gaps or arches of the heavy vaporous-looking wall, small deer and other animals making their way desperately from the devastating fire.

One thing had not struck me. The edges of the two detached thickets were bordered by bushes, while from the trees hung long pieces of very dry Spanish moss. It was thus that, ere I was aware of it, the forest was on fire!

This event struck me with dismay, as it was impossible to foresee to what extent it might proceed. Still, my presence of mind did not desert me, so snatching up one of the rakes, by following the advancing flames, and knocking amid the bushes, and pulling down Spanish moss, I succeeded in saving the thicket—no large wood having been ignited.

Thus, by great good fortune, the conflagration was confined to the grass, leaving before night a black, smoking, desolate-looking plain, where had been a prairie rich in grass and flowers. Several snakes, some animals

like rabbits, and one or two others unknown to me, perished in the flames.

But my own satisfaction was great, for I had now the kind of ground that I required, which I prepared for cultivation in the following simple and original manner. I selected a very large rake, over which I fastened a heavy piece of wood; this forced the iron prongs into the earth, while a rope round my shoulder enabled me to drag it along. The grasses were burnt to the very roots, and the soil being rich, nothing was easier than to turn up a large quantity of it in one day, and by perseverance, enough was soon thus rudely ploughed to enable me to throw in one-half of all my seeds.

Two or three prickly kinds of bushes tied together were then dragged over all, to act as a harrow, and my work was done for the present.

For several days black clouds in the morning, a dampness of the atmosphere, and the prevalence of southerly winds, began to warn me that the wet season was coming. My efforts were redoubled, and among other things I killed a seal, the oil and fat of which nearly filled the two water casks. But another very satisfactory discovery was, that two smaller barrels which came ashore from the wreck contained salt beef and pork.

Some very choice tea, which my uncle was taking out to Virginia, was long since safe in my stores, but the want of sugar almost prevented my caring much about it.

Fish were very abundant at this season, and easily captured with hooks made, after a fashion, from bone. These were dried in the sun, and placed in an empty cask, with a little salt brine scattered over them.

Still the rain kept off, but as I did not venture far from the cave, lest I should be caught in a storm, my time was principally taken up in improving my defences, and planning work for the coming fine weather. Now I had several times noticed, that among those trees which surrounded the pool, there was a magnificent cocoa-nut palm.

I knew that the cocoa-nut palm was of itself sufficient to build, rig, and freight a ship with bread, wine, water, oil,

vinegar, sugar and other commodities. Its advantages were innumerable. Its very aspect was imposing, its erect and lofty bearing seemed to compare with other trees as man with the lower animals. The poor islander of the uncivilised regions reposes beneath its shade, eating and drinking of its fruit; he thatches his hut with its boughs, and weaves them in baskets to carry his food; he cools himself with a fan from its leaflets, and shelters his head with a bonnet from its leaves; with the base of the stalks he makes a taper. The large nuts furnish him with goblets, the small ones with bowls for his pipes; the dry husks kindle his fire, its fibres are twisted into fishing lines and cords for his canoes. His wounds are healed by a balsam from its nut, the dead are embalmed with its oil. The trunk serves him for timber, for paddles, for clubs and for spears.

The one before me rose aloft, tall and slender, without a branch, with some dozen nuts at the top as big as a man's head, and over these were graceful plumes, with their rich green gloss and beautiful fronds of nodding leaves. No means by which they could be reached presented itself to my mind for a long time, until at last the plan of the savage Indians and negroes recurred to my memory. It was, however, not very easy for me to carry out even this simple plan; still I determined to try.

Taking some very strong canvas, I sewed it into a long belt several times double. Then I went to the tree I had selected, which had an unusually tall and smooth trunk. Round this the belt was passed, and the ends of it firmly fastened together. Then my body was passed into the orifice, and it just left space for my limbs to have fair play. The art of climbing in this way consisted in clambering up as far as the band would allow, and then hitching the belt itself upwards.

When fatigue rendered a pause necessary, it was easy to pass the legs round the tree, and shifting the belt to just above the knees, to rest wholly thereupon.

Still, the task was no light one. It demanded great labour and a considerable expenditure of time. More

than an hour had elapsed ere success rewarded my arduous labours, and then great indeed was my surprise and delight.

I looked out upon an expanse of country, lovely beyond all power of description. I had, without observing it, reached the summit of the rock that separated me from the higher land I had so long craved to see, and so close did the boughs of the cocoa palm grow to the rock, that without thinking of the consequences, I swung myself on to a projecting ledge and stood on the long-coveted heights.

Under my feet, spreading far away until the horizon was bounded by lofty hills, lay an interminable series of plains and valleys, covered with the richest and most variegated verdure and foliage. There was every product of the tropics in endless profusion.

An irresistible impulse came upon me to make a voyage of discovery. I was armed only with my pistols, but such is the ardour of human curiosity, that my senses were wilfully blind to the danger that awaited me. In all probability, that lovely region, with its tropical climate and vegetation, was a perfect nest of wild beasts and creeping things.

But caution would be my watchword, and so, the determination once come to, all other considerations were laid aside, and the descent of the rocks was commenced. It was now evident that this stony barrier extended from side to side of the island, or promontory as hope whispered. Those hills must be in Africa, and once on a continent, would not escape be easy and practicable?

The bearings of the point whence I started were easily taken, there being a very peculiarly pointed rock, which I was careful to observe. Then commending myself to the protection of Providence, my journey in this unknown region was commenced. Nothing could be imagined more delightful than the soft turf upon which my feet trod. Flowers of the most delicate and varied hue sent forth a rich and balmy perfume. Then came forests, glades and woods, at which I stood still and wondered, so lovely was the character of the vegetation. Every step discovered

fresh subjects for admiration, until at last, overwhelmed with gratitude and joy at all I saw, I sat down on the edge of a wood in perfect amazement.

The scene which lay before me was charming and fascinating in the extreme. A variegated prairie was bounded by a rock which slightly overhung the plain, its summit being surmounted by bushes and trees. To the right and left were trees of every variety known to the tropics, while the green sward was enamelled with flowers. Sinking beside the fallen trunk of a tree, I gazed upon the landscape with silent rapture.

Suddenly the scene was enlivened in a most unexpected and far from unpleasant manner. The bushes stirred, a little creature came gambolling out, which I knew at once to be a monkey cub. Its mother followed, and with an amount of fondness that might have shamed many a human creature, began to play with its young. They rolled together on the ground, they ran races, and the mother seemed to attach much satisfaction to the victories of the younger brute. Gradually they approached the rock on the edge of the plain, while a strange jabbering sound amid the trees showed that there were many spectators of the domestic scene.

Suddenly the jabbering ceased, and the monkey and her cub remained for an instant stock still. Then with horror and affright, I saw emerge from the thicket to my right hand the terrible and hideous python. It crawled slowly forward. It had been feeding, but not to the extent which produces torpor, for its pace was sufficiently rapid for its purpose. With a shrill cry like that of a babe, the cub flew towards its mother, who cast it upon its back, and would have fled.

The python, moving slowly at first, made a rapid spring at the female monkey, and fixed its fangs in its flesh. Then with a sudden twist it brought its folds to bear upon the wretched animals, encircling them in such a way as to render escape impossible. A powerful squeeze from the hideous brute completed the sacrifice. Mother and cub were reduced to a mere pulp. Then it began slowly to cover its prey with a kind of foam, after

which its fearful jaws were opened, and the huge mouthful swallowed at once.

This horrid scene over, the great snake was evidently satisfied, for it crawled close under the rock, and coiling itself up in a fearful pile, began the slow and disgusting process of serpent digestion. I would gladly have fled, but to move was beyond my power. I lay in the most abject state of terror.

Suddenly the jabbering in the woods and in the trees on the summit of the cliff recommenced, and my attention was directed to a whole troop of monkeys that probably had witnessed the tragedy with silent awe. Instinct, however, seemed to make them aware that all danger was over for the moment, and I could see them in clusters hanging from the boughs, and gazing below upon the recumbent monster. Then again the fearful jabbering was renewed for awhile; then ceased.

A pause of about five minutes ensued, during which a conference seemed to take place. How monkeys convey their meaning to one another, whether they have a language of their own or not, is one of those mysteries which I pretend not to explain, but that they act in concert is certain. In this instance there was a clear understanding, for I now saw several of the older males lean quietly over the precipice and examine the monster's position with a keen and observant eye. Then they all retired, and to my utter bewilderment went to work. A stone many hundred pounds in weight overhung very nearly the spot where the coiled snake lay, and this the monkeys began slowly to push.

A dozen men, after a thorough understanding, could not have acted with more precision. The stone was moved bodily from its place until, on examination, it was poised right over the sleeping snake. Then an aged monkey peered down the side of the cliff, and made a final survey. It seemed satisfactory, for the next minute it tottered upon the edge, by the sheer upheaving force of a whole crowd of the infuriated animals, and fell with a crash upon the slumbering python.

It smashed its head and several other parts of its body,

while the rest writhed in horrible agony, which lasted, it seemed to me, an almost incredible space of time, the monkeys all the while leaping along the boughs capering and dancing with a strange mixture of terror and delight.

It was a horrible spectacle, and one which not only detracted from all the beauties of the scenery around, but sent me back thoughtful and sad. Beautiful as was the verdure-clad portion of the land, it was evidently infested by creatures that would have made hideous an earthly paradise. At every step I started, expecting to be attacked by some other fearful animal, and glad and thankful were my feelings when approaching the rocks I recognised the landmark which was to guide my footsteps.

But the way by which I returned was not that which had taken me to the scene of the combat between the python and the monkeys, so that I found the rocks considerably more difficult to climb, until at last my steps were stayed by a kind of yawning gulf, into which it was not difficult to descend, and where a cool and pellucid-looking pool invited me to slake my thirst.

I accordingly descended, and at once recognised the scene of the encounter between myself and the huge python.

My fatigue was by this time so great that I gladly availed myself of this short road, and as I began to remove the barrier between this and my own cave, I was delighted to hear the barking of Tiger, who evidently had been very miserable in consequence of my prolonged absence.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A WET SEASON.

NEXT day the rain commenced falling in torrents, driving me very reluctantly to the shelter of my cave. In my leap from the cocoa-nut tree, I had shaken down some of the fruit, and I now proceeded to make use of

them. Having heard that the fibres of the bamboo made excellent candle and lamp wicks, I resolved to attempt the manufacture of some.

With my saw and chisel I divided each nut in two, then softening the oil and lard together by the fire in a small barrel, the contents were poured into the half cocoa-nuts, in which I afterwards held the bamboo fibres until the fat was of a consistence to hold the wicks upright. Placing these inside the cave, they soon cooled, and proved to be very tolerable substitutes for better lamps.

Now I began to lay out my plans for the many days of my first rainy season. Having discovered that I could communicate with the more fertile and lovely, though more dangerous part of the island, by means of the python cavern, I no longer thought of completely blocking up the entrance. A rough, strong and serviceable door could easily be made which would keep out most animals.

My own cave was to be divided into four. First there was to be my sleeping-room, next my parlour, then my kitchen, and finally my store-room. The first and third occupied my attention chiefly. The studding sail boom, though extremely unwieldy, served my purpose admirably, for a careful measurement showed that it was as long as the cave was wide. Now the sides of the cave being rough and unpolished, I soon prepared a kind of hollow in a shelf with my crowbar; then by the assistance of planks, beams and the trunks of trees, with the crowbar for a lever, I was able to raise the boom to the height of six feet, thus cutting the cave exactly in two. Still using my valuable crowbar, I made a rough groove in the soft rock underneath. Planks, bamboos and stakes were then nailed to the supporting boom.

Bamboos were now carried from the boom to the sides of the cave nearest the waterfall, and thus in a few days I had at least one comfortable room, about ten feet square, with walls a little more than six feet high. A quantity of dried boughs and leaves formed my only couch, but my ideas as to the future were more ambitious.

Passing out at a doorway, behold my store-room, next

to which was the kitchen. To the right of this was my armoury, also an apartment which was to be either my workshop or my sitting-room, as occasion required.

This business being finished to the satisfaction of myself and dog, less arduous labours succeeded, such as mending my clothes, making with rope yarns, seal sinews and bamboo fibres, certain nets, the use of which had often occurred to me. My books were now examined, and turned out to be composed of a medical guide, a work on botany, a Bible, a French Testament, grammar and dictionary. But during this season my labour was too assiduous to leave me time for the perusal of their contents. Efforts of high mechanical genius soon demanded my attention. A bedstead, a chair, and a table were my constant dream. The bedstead was my first task, and was an easy one, though the question of bed furniture must remain matter for future consideration. The skins of beasts could alone supply this deficiency.

The seaman's chest was about five feet six inches long, by about eighteen inches wide. I managed to take it apart, leaving each side with one of the ends attached to it. Then I placed the ends together, and nailing a board at the other extremity, had now a square box about three feet in width. Across this were placed some planks, then bamboos, then boughs and leaves. The skins of the animals I had killed were useless, because they smelled badly, and also because they were hard as boards. I had as yet to discover, or recollect, the art of making my skins soft and supple. This bed may appear rude enough, but to me it was a luxury, simply because it took me off the ground.

As to a table and chair, I made something which served my turn, but the very worst carpenter who ever botched a job would have turned up his nose at them in ridicule and disgust. And thus the wet weather passed away in these and similar jobs.

Every morning and evening I peered forth to examine the weather, but for a long time found that the rain poured down in torrents, making my clear and transparent pool thick and muddy, while such was the abun-

dance of water that it overflowed through various channels and escaped towards the sea. At length, however, the balmy atmosphere, the glad song of birds, and the hum of thousands of insects, proclaimed the advent of another summer.

Quickly arming myself, I sallied into the open air with my dog. The scene was miraculous. Everything had changed to a bright green; the trees, shrubs, plants, and the grass beneath our feet were sparkling with drops of rain that looked like shining pearls; the feathered choristers sang loud minstrelsy aloft, and proclaimed that they were glad.

The shoots which I had planted had taken root, and so rapid had been their growth, that I had to cut off young boughs to make my way to the outside, after placing a plank as usual across the pitfall. My first thoughts were of my fields, to which I hurried with great anxiety, and indeed it was time.

Everything I had planted had come up, but to my horror and disgust a small drove of the most delicate-looking gazelles were busily engaged in cropping my young shoots. There was a male, a female, and three graceful young ones. Their forms were light and elegant; their necks long and slender; their limbs slim and delicate; but this did not prevent me from looking upon them as thieves who were devouring my substance, and enraged beyond measure at what seemed to me a sheer act of piracy, I levelled my fowling-piece, and taking deliberate aim, shot the buck, which fell heavily to the ground. Then, running forward, I started the others off at a gallop, and saw no more of them at that time.

On examination it proved that the seeds had come up, not only oats, barley and peas, but carrots, onions and turnips, which was to me a great mercy, as the constant eating of salt animal food would be sure to bring on scurvy. In the first place I decided to skin and stuff the buck gazelle, which I accomplished with some difficulty by means of my knife and Spanish moss and grass. I inserted four sticks in place of the bones of the legs.

This task, and cutting the gazelle into joints, occupied nearly the whole day, when I returned to the cave well supplied with fresh meat, of which myself and dog made a hearty and delightful meal. As I sat that evening smoking my pipe, and performing some of the many tasks which never allowed time to pass wearily, I turned over in my mind certain things I had read, and came to a decision. Behold me, then, sallying forth next morning, armed with only my pistols. By my side was the captain's telescope, in place of a cutlass; in my hand two wands, at the end of which was fastened a few strips of red cloth, and in a bundle, a net.

About half a mile from my corn fields was a valley, very narrow at both ends, but wide in the middle. It was skirted in all its length by precipitous rocks, and, being very fertile with some pleasant shade, it was a favourite passage of mine on my way to the sea. One end of it, that farthest from me, was not more than seven or eight feet across. This I proceeded to block up by means of stakes, bamboos and stones, until I had contrived such a barrier as even a gazelle would not leap over. Then, using my telescope, I saw a little drove at some distance, browsing and coming my way.

A little up the valley, where fertile tracts were likely to draw them, I planted my wands, with the crimson cloth waving in the wind, and then crouched down upon my face, holding my dog firmly by the mouth. For an hour I lay in this position, behind some thick bushes. Fortunately, the wind was from the gazelles towards me, so that even their keen scent could not detect my presence. My old hunting trick succeeded. The little animals, attracted by the fluttering cloth, came slowly up, their noses raised to the wind, the doe first, the kids after. No sooner had they passed me, than, rising to my feet, I gave a loud cry, and rushing across the narrow mouth of the valley, had in a moment placed a net across their pathway, which effectually prevented all chance of their return.

My raptures knew no bounds. I had a home, I had my corn fields;—now had I not flocks and herds?

I well knew that it would be useless to attempt to tame such an animal as the gazelle all at once, so I resolved to proceed by degrees. The grass of the valley would not last the drove very long, but before they could run short I hoped to have such a crop of carrots, turnips and even barley and oats, as to enable me to spare them some food. The gazelle feeds willingly on anything green; and, in order to use them to my presence, I made a further inroad on their liberty.

By means of stakes and willow-like boughs, I made at one end of the valley a kind of enclosure, like a sheep-pen, into which I easily taught my dog to drive them every evening, when I made a point of giving them turnip-tops, carrots and such like, in small quantities it is true, but quite enough to make them tame in a few weeks. In time, indeed, the younger ones would even feed out of my hand.

Such occupations were not only a relief to my mind, and a kind of amusement, as it were, but enabled me to look forward to the future with somewhat more of calm satisfaction. Altogether I had not been more than six months on this deserted island, where the foot of man apparently never trod before, and already great mercies had been vouchsafed to me. My ammunition was to me invaluable, and any means of husbanding it peculiarly pleasing. None could be more effective than that which now seemed to offer itself in the form of domestic animals which would in time supply me with milk and butcher's meat.

That, however, was a question of the future, and the present could not be neglected. My clothes were wearing out with singular rapidity; nor did I at present see very clearly how this deficiency was to be made up; and then my dread of wild beasts, mingled with a certain vague feeling of uneasiness with regard to the possibility of an attack from roaming savages, made me anxious to fortify my cavern.

My thicket was in itself a very good defence, but still both man and beast might force their way through its intricacies. Then my dependence would be solely in my

own valour and the power of my weapons. With bamboos and stakes a kind of wall was made, which, with clods of earth and turf, was raised to a very excellent consistency. Then, with thin bamboos, I made a sloping roof, over which the creeping and parasitical plants soon grew so thickly that it took me many hours every week to cut away superfluous quantities. Under this I placed about half of my guns, fastened in such a way as to admit of being turned in various directions, while in a corner were three or four more, which, with my miniature battery, were always loaded.

There was everything on the island in the way of raw material, but my recollections and experiences did not serve me as to preparing deer or other skins for use, while how to utilise the different fibres and grasses was to me a mystery. Still I felt that, cast on my own resources, there must occur to my mind some way of getting over these difficulties, and I spent many a long evening in making experiments that for a long time ended in utter failure. It was not in my nature to despair, so for the present my clothes were repaired as well as I could with such materials as the seaman's chest and the wreck afforded.

Considering the really solitary position I was in, cut off from all communication with my kind, my evenings were much more agreeable than I had any right to expect. When we entered the kitchen to make the necessary preparations for supper, my dog would sit looking at me with becoming gravity all the while. A stew of meat, vegetables and even fish, was the general evening meal, unless I was fortunate enough to have caught any fowl in certain rude traps which I was continually making. Then while this was cooking, little odd jobs,—such as putting up shelves, improving the partitions, levelling the floor—occupied me. When the supper was ready, it was placed on the ground, and a lamp put on each side of my table; then with my knife and a very awkward substitute for a spoon, the food was ladled out into the half of a cocoa nut. Such portions as were selected for the dog, whose appetite troubled me much

in the wet seasons, were cast to the ground and devoured with all due gravity.

My shoes were a great trouble to me. I could not contrive to do anything with them for some time, so I was obliged to wear them until they dropped off my feet, for they were only kept together by rude ligatures. Still, with knives, thread, and good needles, some shoes it was certain might be made, if only the leather could be found.

After my visit to the interior of the island, and the terrible sight of the snake's death, I had not much inclination to explore that region; but about two months after the cessation of the rainy season, I fancied that I required a change. The monotony of my existence had not varied for some time, and accordingly a journey through my own part of the island was determined on.

The place evidently abounded with several of the deer tribe, and an addition to my herd appeared to me very desirable, especially if any of the goats, which must have been left by the Spaniards or buccaneers, could be captured. I had made several attempts to capture them by traps and pitfalls, but with no success; they were too cunning, or else my engines were not properly constructed.

However, after breakfast on the morning in question, I armed myself and sallied forth for a more accurate examination of a large wooded tract, which my telescope had enabled me to discover to the right of Wild False Bay. I had seen many goats skipping about in that region, and I determined to try if some means could be found of capturing them, in order to place them along with my small flock of gazelles.

My first halt was at the bamboo and bread-fruit grove, where a hearty meal was made. From that spot to where the larger woods commenced was about a mile, trees and bushes being scattered here and there over the otherwise sandy plain.

As this was to me a new locality, I was naturally anxious to explore it, for I continually expected that new and useful productions would fall in my way.

I had risen to my feet, and was leaning my back against the tree as I gazed around, half inclined to take a shot at some fat birds, which were perched on a bough close at hand, when a whizzing sound struck strangely on my startled senses.

A bird fell at my feet transfixed with an arrow.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CANNIBAL INDIANS.

I STOOD, for a moment, transfixed with such horror and astonishment as a man might feel who had suddenly come face to face with the Evil One. My eyes were first cast hastily round in search of the hunter, but seeing no one I took a hurried and frightened survey of the weapon which had slain his prey.

It was a long, slender, harmless-looking reed, but it had killed the bird, and was certainly shot by human hands. With eyes almost starting from their sockets, I remained, methinks, for a few minutes utterly unable to move; I felt like one in a dream—my feet, as it were, glued to the ground. Casting my eyes hurriedly around, I rushed to some bushes, and sank behind them, while, letting go my hold of the gun, I clasped my two hands round the dog's nose, and, by main force and signs, kept him from barking. Then I saw a man advance slowly to the spot where the bird lay, and pick it up.

Despite my precautions, the dog gave a low, savage growl. The man turned quickly, and peered with wild and restless eyes in our direction. Then he sat down, and applying both his feet to the middle of the crossbow he carried, he bent back the string to a notch, and took a fresh arrow, which doubtless was poisoned, and fixed it in the groove; so light was the reed, he had to stick it on with gum to prevent its blowing away.

Rising to his feet, he listened attentively, while his eyes examined the tops of the bushes to see if they moved. For a moment he appeared inclined to come

my way, in which case he would most assuredly have died. My brow was contracted, my heart beat violently, and I determined to sell my own life dearly. However, he changed his mind and turned whence he came.

The relief was great, and without further hesitation I hurried back at the top of my speed in the direction of my cave. Never did I run so fast, either before or since. No sooner did I reach home than I saw carefully to the pit-fall, and entering within my entrenchments, I renewed the priming of my guns.

Then I entered the cave, and secured my dog in my bedroom by means of a stout cord, and there left him to himself with a pile of bones to gnaw. I knew that if the savages heard him bark, they would recognise in him a strange animal, and would probably run any risk to procure a sight of him.

My feelings on sitting down within the shelter of the wall which I had erected were intensely painful. The character of the Indians who inhabited the latitudes in which my island was doubtless situated, was familiar to my memory. They were savages and cannibals, delighting in nothing more than in killing, and afterwards devouring their enemies, and that they would consider a white man in that light was a certainty.

How bitterly did I now feel the desolate condition in which I was placed! In the excitement of work, of discovery, or of providing for the present and the future, I had little time for bemoaning my misfortunes. Now, however, that a danger which had appeared distant and only probable, was so near, my hard fate all but drew tears from my eyes. But sorrow and moaning could avail nothing—it was a time for calm and deliberate action.

Should I remain where I was, firmly entrenched, or should I go forth and see the real state of the case, acting then as circumstances might dictate? This matter was debated in my mind for some time, and at last curiosity and anxiety prevailed. Passing through the cave, I opened the door I had made, and after a careful survey proceeded through the outer cave. In this way the upper rocks were gained, which, towering even over

the tall trees that surrounded my pool, enabled me to examine the smaller portion of the island. As I expected, my telescope guided me to a column of smoke in the direction of the wooded district it had been my intention fully to explore. There they were in numbers, but with what intention it was impossible for me to imagine. The only way was to creep as close to them as circumstances would allow, and examine for myself. Slowly and thoughtfully the lower part of the island was regained. My pistols were fastened to my belt, my sword hung at my side, and two guns loaded with ball placed on my shoulders; thus accoutred and armed, I sallied forth to reconnoitre.

My eyes were cast to the right and left at every step I took. The rustling of a tree top, the movement of a bush, the cry of a bird, made me start, affrighted and alarmed. But as I advanced, no signs of the savages being seen, my courage returned, until at last I was able to walk along with something like calmness.

At length, as evening was falling, the first grove of trees in the wooded district was reached. Extreme caution was now to be used, as the savages might be lurking about. Then came a somewhat dense forest track, through which I made my way with some difficulty, though now and then the course of a winding stream assisted me in my advance.

Suddenly an open space appeared, and, raising my head over a fallen trunk, I could distinctly observe the intruders upon my hitherto deserted island. They were not real negroes, as I might have naturally expected, but of a tribe nearly akin to that race. They were tall, strongly built and well made—they were nearly naked, only having round the waist a belt, from which hung an apron made of the skin of the wild cat or Tiger. Their teeth were filed, and in some cases blackened, which gave them a ghastly and ferocious look. Their woolly hair was drawn out into long thin plaits, to the ends of which were strung white beads, or copper and iron rings.

Some had feather caps, some long queues of their own hair mixed with tow dyed black, which gave them a most

wild and grotesque appearance. They were armed with long spears or lances, while on the left arm hung a shield, which I afterwards discovered was made of elephant hide.

They had women with them, less dressed than the men, and uglier. They, too, had their teeth filed, and carried their younger children on their backs in slings. They, as well as the men, were tattooed, especially on the breast.

This sight terrified me greatly, as the presence of women and many captives seemed to indicate an intention to settle. Besides, they had already commenced collecting bamboos and stakes for the purpose of erecting huts, which some of the women and prisoners were doing in a very ingenious manner. They drove stakes into the ground; then to these they added split bamboos—one set outside, and another in—while the crevices were closed up with palm leaves. Canoes of various sizes were drawn up on the beach, while one of singular elegance and small size had been towed up a creek, and served the women for a ferry-boat.

All these preparations were terrible in my eyes, for if they were going to remain on the island, my hopes of happiness were gone. The thought flashed across my mind that perhaps they had discovered my small flock of gazelles, in which case they would know that the island was inhabited. Accordingly I determined, as soon as safety would allow, to destroy all signs of an enclosure, and release my flock.

Then it struck me that perhaps these savages were on a hunting expedition. The island was not only fertile in parts, but full of game. Of this the tribe might be aware, and make a great periodical hunt. Should this be the case, there might be a hope of escaping their notice until their departure. With this view I determined to retreat during the darkness of the night. Just then some of the savages began lighting a large fire, round which a great many of them were soon congregated.

Then behind me in the forest rose the shrill sound of

a single conch, which was quickly answered from the camp. Next instant I distinctly heard the tramp of feet, which made me glide away in a lateral direction. I was not far off when a hunting party came in sight. Strung on poles carried on the shoulders of two men were *three young gazelles*.

My heart sank within me, for now I felt that all was lost, so, without using even tolerable caution, I fled in the direction of the larger and more fertile portion of the island. Whether any one followed me or not it was impossible for me to say. The idea uppermost in my mind was to place as great a distance as possible between myself and the savages.

After running for about a quarter of an hour in the dark, burdened as I was with my guns and other weapons, I was compelled to rest. The night was very dark, nor could I distinguish ten yards before me, so that I was obliged to feel my way. Presently, my eyes becoming more accustomed to the gloom, I saw before me a dark line like a wall, but what it was I could not make out. At that moment the sound of human voices, new to me for many weary months, fell upon my ear. They were close at hand.

I had no resource but to run for it once more, else I should surely be discovered, so I retreated through a thicket beside which I had been lying; and scarcely minding what I did, found myself suddenly up to my waist in water. I knew that it was a mangrove swamp. A small rivulet, as it afterwards proved, fell pellucid and clear from its narrow bed, and widened out at once into a large pond of muddy water, redolent of malaria and mosquitoes. It wound its way through an immense grove of these trees, whose roots extended across and met in the middle, showing their huge rounds above the mire and water, like the folds of some huge serpent.

The mangrove is indeed a most singular tree, a native of the East Indies and of most tropical parts, where it grows in swampy situations on the coast, and penetrates even within low water mark of the sea. It attains the height of forty or fifty feet, and is evergreen.

The red mangrove grows commonly by the sea-side, and by rivers or creeks. It always grows out in many roots, about the size of a man's leg, some larger, some less, which, at about six, eight, or ten feet above the ground, join into one trunk or body, that seems to be supported by so many artificial stakes. Wherever this sort of tree grows it is impossible to march because of these stakes, and when forced to go through them, it is very common for people to go half a mile and never set foot on the ground, stepping from root to root. The timber is hard, and good for many uses.

One of the great singularities of this tree is, that the seeds begin to germinate and send out roots while they are yet attached to the parent branches. The natural way in which the tree is propagated is by their roots descending and fixing themselves in the earth. It was this tree that gave rise to the fable of oysters growing from trees, because from its situation on the sea-shore and within tide mark, it becomes a favourite resort of these shell-fish, which cling to its branches, and thus have the appearance of growing from them.

But all this occurred to my mind afterwards. Crawling on by means of placing my two guns on one shoulder, I caught at the huge limb of a gnarled root, and in this way reached the parent stem, which was of immense size, and fortunately hollow. Without reflecting that such holes are too often the resort and place of refuge of dangerous animals, while the swamp itself—that region of hopeless disorder—was the home of the alligator, lizard, and rattlesnake, I entered panting and exhausted. For some time I was utterly prostrated, but soon recovering, I again listened. Not a sound of human voices could now be heard.

Still, it did not appear wise to return, so I took my guns and placed them against the side of the tree, after which, having in the morning provided against the contingency of stopping out all night, I unstrung the steward's lantern and prepared to light it.

When something like calm returned I became awake to the beauty of that dark and terrible scene, illumined

here and there by the vivid flash of the fire-fly. The mangroves spread, I could see even by that dim light, in long vistas in every direction, roofed over by the leafy arches of this wondrous tree; while in the distance uprose other evergreens that formed dense jungles, and were the abode of numberless warbling birds. A heavy drapery of vines and other parasitic plants of gorgeous splendour fell in rich folds on all sides, veiling at times the vistas of these long forest arches. Every now and then could be heard the splash of some huge animal in the water, doubtless alligators. There was, too, the croaking hum of the horned frog and other animals which haunt these dismal and melancholy swamps.

After listening for some time and hearing nothing but sounds I could explain, my lantern was lit. The tree was about five feet in diameter, and the hollow about ten feet high; and in this place, surrounded by the foul exhalations of the swamp, I was to pass the night without food, or even water, unless I drank from the pool below. In my hurry and confusion, the necessity of refreshment during the night had never crossed my mind. There was, however, no help for it. Never, even in the early days of my captivity on that deserted and miserable spot, did I feel so unhappy as now. Just when by great efforts resignation had fallen on my soul; just when, with a firm reliance on Providence, I was about to act as if my destiny for life were fixed, and when house and lands were already prepared, this fearful blight had come.

Gloomy and sad, I sat within my tree anxiously listening for any sound that might indicate the approach of my enemies. Close to my hand were my loaded weapons, and shaded as much from without as possible, my lantern was still so placed as to scare any animal that might have approached. Now it was that I missed my pipe. Thought was too painful, and as a natural consequence of anxiety and watching, my throat became parched with thirst, my lips dry, and my whole frame burning. I had with me a little gourd of brandy, and a half cocoa-nut, slung to my side. To drink the brandy alone was folly, as it would only have added to my feverish thirst.

Setting my foot upon the tangled roots of this extraordinary tree, I stooped low to reach the water. Just under the roots was a black mass, apparently a trunk which had fallen. On this I trod. As I did so, it glided away from me, so that I plunged headlong into the hideous and slimy pool. It was a huge old alligator, which had taken up its quarters for the night, and which I had disturbed.

In my fright, as I caught at the arching boughs, I dropped the half cocoa-nut which served me as a cup, and clambering back into the hollow tree, hastily swallowed a dram of brandy ere my equanimity was restored. Then a sense of fever and impatience came over me. The hideous and pallid gloom that environed my shelter, the hum of night insects, the splashing about of strange beasts, the bewildering noises that belong to tropical swamps, the acrid, mephitic vapour which rises from dead leaves, weeds and stagnant pools, made me feel not exactly drowsy, but torpid.

I fell into a heavy stupor; and I dreamed a dream.

It was glorious sunshine. Not a cloud was to be seen. The murky, wild, forsaken swamp, through which the wind whistled mournfully; the dolorous trees, with their black funereal palls of moss and lichens; the dark arches of that desolate impervious jungle; all changed to a bright forest, alive with birds, where the cedar, and the poplar, and the beech, with honeysuckles, vines and laurels, made the scene exquisite, and the heart glad. Then treading lightly over the soft, fragrant sward, what cometh? My heart beat wildly. It was a figure surrounded, as it were, with a glory, which, with its eyes fixed on me, approached swiftly and joyously. And then I knew I was in the presence of my dear cousin, from whom I had been parted in the dread leap for life.

With a shriek and a start my senses returned, and it was a long time ere the beating of my heart would again allow me any repose.

CHAPTER XXV

A NIGHT ATTACK.

WHEN I came to myself it was morning, my lamp had gone out, and a refreshing breeze that wafted away the pestilential vapours and dews of night seemed slightly to revive me. A little opening in the green-roofed forest showed me that the sky was of a crystalline blue, which spread a broad sea of light over all nature, while the shadows of the forest aisles were themselves pierced by its purple rays. It was a morning to revel in. But I was in too great peril to allow calm and gentle thoughts to enter my mind. Then came the gnawing sensation of hunger. My head ached, particularly at the back, my eyes swam, so that all objects were indistinct and hazy, and I was compelled to drink brandy to keep body and soul together.

A kind of stupid apathy came over me, which for a moment made me reckless. I would have fought a tiger in his den had there been a chance of water and food.

Then I heard a strangely alarming noise, and the next instant I saw in the distance a body of about a dozen or fifteen warriors, armed with bows, shields and spears, advancing towards me. I was seized with so sudden a panic that I fled, leaving my guns behind me. The direction I took was where I could make out dry land, and despite the slime and mud I had to wade through, I succeeded in reaching the spot. But I felt I could not go any further, so swiftly climbing a tree, the branches of which nearly touched the ground, and crouching where the huge boughs spread out, I awaited the event.

My pistols were primed, and little as it was my wish to take human life, like any other desperate man the resolve was now finally come to. But the savages appeared not to have seen me, so that they passed ere I had quite recovered myself.

My feelings were much like those of a man suddenly relieved, and as I sat on my bough slowly recovering,

I was again forced to have recourse to my flask. Looking upwards, it was with some considerable surprise that I saw a regularly thatched roof over my head. Some animal had taken advantage of the circumstance that, at knotted intervals of about six feet the boughs went straight out, and laid a sloping roof of boughs and leaves, quite impervious to the rays of the sun. These branches were fastened to the tree in the middle of the structure by means of wild vines and creepers. Nothing could be more regular and artistic than the way in which the affair was managed, so that I was lost in astonishment at what it could mean.

Then glancing keenly about, without moving or even disturbing a leaf, I at once discovered the meaning of what had so strangely puzzled me.

They were ape nests.

About twenty feet from me were two trees, distant from each other about five feet, and on each tree at the same height, were two of these slanting green thatched roofs. They were fresher and more newly constructed than mine, it being the practice of their architects instead of repairing the old ones, to make new nests to protect them from the nightly rains or dews. Beneath these shelters were two monkeys, that, frightened by the hunters, had hurriedly sought their homes, and were now gravely seated with their arms round the trunk, grinning every now and then in the direction of the savages.

Then, with that ludicrous effect which is seen in no other animal, the male and female began to crack some nuts, and pelt one another in the most odd kind of way, grimacing and turning up their odd little eyes at every moment. My pistols were close to my hand, and such were my sensations of hunger, that I felt very much inclined to shoot one of the little wretches, but fear of attracting the savages restrained me.

Half an hour had now elapsed, so I determined to crawl down, and, weak as I was, to return to my cave, where I should be safe and obtain that food and rest which I so much needed. It was, however, necessary to

return and fetch my guns, as, if discovered, they might afford some clue to my presence on the island. How I succeeded is beyond my own knowledge. It was an arduous and perilous task, in which I was kept up solely by my flask of brandy, which truly on this occasion saved my life.

My journey was performed by slow stages. A feeling of weariness and hunger made me frequently lie down, and as often throw away my guns in despair. But every now and then, by chewing a leaf, and once or twice by drinking from little rivulets I had to cross, the road at last grew shorter.

But a new trouble assailed me. By tramping through the wet mud and sitting in them so long, my shoes were in an awful state, and now that I was walking on sharp pointed rocks, their soft and pulpy substance gave way completely; and but that I tied them together with long tendrils of vine-like plants, and then with strips from my shirt, the end of my journey would never have been reached; as it was, my feet bled dreadfully, and caused me intense pain.

As I passed the valley of the gazelles, my delight may be imagined at seeing the little animals feeding peacefully. The savages had not then visited this part, and the gazelles which I had seen were not mine.

One great cause of my safety was the circumstance that the savages had discovered an easy entrance to the other part of the island, so that they were not likely to examine that which I called my own. When my eyes fell once more upon the spot which to me was home, my senses seemed to return, and though my feet, now bleeding, bare and swollen, were scarcely able to carry me, new vigour appeared to fill my soul. I crawled through my enclosure, crossed the pitfall, removed the plank carefully, and then entered my cavern. My dog barked, but when he heard my voice he began to whine with joy. But before I did anything else I ate a biscuit very slowly, soaking it in brandy and water. This appeared to revive me. Then I let loose the dog, which nearly knocked me down in the exuberance of his joy.

The animal was very hungry ; so, after feeding him with a little biscuit, I took a good piece of meat and put it on to boil in my copper box, which served me as a kettle. Then I bathed my poor feet !

All this time my mind was still running on the strange visitors who were upon my island. Sometimes I fancied that after all it must be only a hunting expedition, and that as soon as they had completed their object they would go away. Still, should Providence destine me to spend a long period on that inhospitable shore, the constant recurrence of such visits would be extremely annoying, as my flocks and herds, my cultivated fields, and anything else I might devote my time to, would certainly betray my presence.

Wearied, footsore and utterly exhausted, my only resource now was to lie down and rest. This I did with such an enjoyment as only those who have suffered as I did can understand. I anointed my feet copiously with grease, and did the same with my very last pair of new shoes. Then having partaken freely of boiled meat and the liquor in which it was cooked, I lay down to rest.

Sleep fell upon me like a vaporous cloud, wrapping my senses in oblivion. Not even a dream visited my slumbers, and when I did awake it was marvellous how much restored I felt. My constitution was a good one, and youth was on my side, while hunger had not had time to produce its more fatal effects.

Feeling no longer sleepy, I went into my verandah—battery as I called it—and looked out. The night was still and calm, the clouds were heavy in the extreme, and not a star was visible. Stillness hung over all nature, except when now and then a tree waved under the influence of the wind. My weapons were all ready to hand, my pistols were in my belt, and my double-barrelled gun heavily loaded. I hoped, however, that any use for all this formidable array of guns might be needless. Then my dog gave a low moan or howl that startled me. I listened attentively, and could distinguish at a distance the hum of human voices. They were coming my way.

I was calm now, for the moment for action had come. Catching my dog by his rude collar of rope, my first act was to drag him into the cave and tie him up, my next to ignite a piece of rope, which burnt slowly like a fusee match. Then I returned, opened the pans of all my guns that were tied to the wall, emptied fresh powder into them, and laid a train. My other guns were seen to; then my heart beating high, my teeth firmly set, I awaited.

The cries of the savages were now very distinct. It appeared to me that they were chasing something. Then I distinctly heard something light, like an animal of slender foot and swift step, enter my pathway. It was treading its way cautiously and carefully, as if fatigue were overcoming it, or the circuitous route were difficult to follow.

Then a dark vague form appeared, the shape of which I could no way make out. Next minute it fell with a shrill kind of shriek, that did not betoken a very fierce animal, into the pitfall. I had, in my great confusion of mind, forgotten this, my moat or ditch.

But now the clouds broke, and the treacherous moon burst forth, just as I heard the cries of the savages, as they halted outside my enclosure. Every gun was pointed straight at the opening. A dead silence ensued. They were searching for the path. A shrill kind of warwhoop proclaimed their success and my confusion. Two minutes, which seemed an hour, passed, and then half a dozen savages peered from the opening across the pit-fall, as if surveying my habitation, and seeking to discover some way of crossing. My lighted rope was at once brought into requisition, and a tremendous flash that almost blinded me was followed by a report, and then by shrieks and yells that seemed to re-echo from the very roof of the heavens. When the smoke cleared away nothing was to be seen, while I could hear the terror-stricken and frightened savages calling to one another in the most piteous and bewailing tones I had ever heard. In a few minutes all was still, and I was again alone.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE STRANGE CAPTURE.

MY knowledge of savage character made me aware that I had nothing to fear from those warriors who had felt the effect of my volley. It was doubtless new to them, and would for a long time prevent any intrusion upon my quarter of the island. The discharge had startled me; then how much more must it have astounded the savages.

It now remained to learn what was the nature of the game which the savages were pursuing. For this purpose, seeing to the priming of my pistols, I returned into the cave, and after taking some refreshment which I much needed, I let loose the dog, which flew, barking and yelling, towards the pit-fall. My cursory examination of the creature that had fallen into the trap, as well as its faint shrill cry, convinced me that it was nothing that I need fear very much; still, not knowing the exact nature of any of the animals on the island, no proper precaution was neglected. The wood which covered the steps was slowly removed.

Daylight was breaking, but a lantern was ready with which to explore the depths of the pit. The dog still kept barking, but did not show that alarm which was usual when in the presence of the fiercer animals. All this time not a sound came from below. Presently all that prevented the exit of the creature was removed, but it came not forth. I peered into the pit, thrusting back the dog, but still I could see nothing. As a last resource I took up my lantern, and clutching a pistol in my right hand, I began to descend.

On the ground, utterly insensible, was *the most beautiful girl* I had ever dreamed of! She was not a day more than sixteen.

I set down my lantern, I cast away my pistol, and raising the girl, I carried her into the open air. Laying her down, my flask was fetched, a little brandy mingled with water was poured down her throat, and with

some more I bathed her forehead. She opened her eyes. Let him who in a dungeon has been confined apart from the human race, and who suddenly is restored to society, imagine what were my sensations at finding myself once more in fellowship with my kind.

She gazed at me, speechless with wonder. By signs I tried to make her understand that she had nothing to fear, and once more taking hold of my lantern, I assisted her to rise and enter my cavern. She moved as in a dream, but with what trembling grace! for, doubtless, the fearful volley from my guns was still ringing in her ears. The girl had no clothes save a woven petticoat of fibres, and a kind of necklace of some small shining nuts.

I spoke gently to her, but she shook with alarm. Still I feared not but that in time I might tame her. Already visions of the joys of companionship flitted through my soul, and dreams of happiness I could not have hoped for, flashed across my imagination. I led her to my kitchen, and well aware that she was only seeking an opportunity to fly, placed her in a corner, and made Tiger lie down at her feet.

It appeared to me—at least so I thought then—that the poor creature was as much afraid of the master as of the animal, so I began, pretending not to take notice of her, to broil some ham, which, with biscuit, I gave her to eat. She shook her head; but frowning, I made signs to her that she must take some, and made her believe that if she did not the dog should eat her. She then forced herself to swallow, and became more friendly.

I then showed her my cavern, and, by signs which I fancy were plainly indicative of my delight at her presence, signified that the best furnished room, my own, would be given up for her use. By degrees, her alarm wore off, and before night we were as good friends as any two could be who were unable to communicate by words.

She ate freely, smiled, showing her dazzling teeth, not filled like those of the savages from whom she had escaped—and studied everything with great curiosity and pleasure; so that when I left her in my chamber for the

night she appeared to be quite reconciled. It was many hours ere I composed myself to sleep. The island now seemed to me suddenly transformed into an earthly paradise. I was no longer alone, and my companion was as lovely as Eve in the garden of Eden.

When dawn broke, having lit a fire and prepared what I thought to be a tempting breakfast, I opened the door of the inner chamber to let forth my prize. The room was empty. Wildly I dashed from my cavern, bounded over the pit-fall, and rushed in the direction of the sea. There she was, about a mile a-head of me. I shouted; she did not even turn, but continued running. Bracing up every nerve, and determined not to be left to dreary solitude again, I ran at full speed, but she had disappeared in the forest, in the direction of the savage camp.

I bounded through the woods; I reached the other side; I passed the site of the abandoned Indian camp; I came to the sea-shore, where the rich tropical vegetation in many places came down to the very water, and there she was, just starting in the small canoe which I had seen in the narrow creek.

I rushed out into the water; I cried wildly to her to come back; I tore my hair; but she turned round only once, said something I could not understand, and then was carried to the eastward along the island by the current, and I was once more alone.

My feelings cannot be described, when, regaining the shore, I cast myself upon the beach. Resignation to my lot had come about by slow degrees. The necessity for work, the daily occupations which consumed so much time, the thought of how many had, like myself, been cast away and yet had been saved, slowly reconciled me to my lot.

But now a vision of beauty had crossed my path: a girl, evidently as amiable as she was lovely, had come to cheer my solitude. During the watches of the previous night I had imagined myself another Adam in Paradise with Eve; I had laid out plans for taming and civilizing my exquisite prize; I had thought how, when she could understand my language, it would be sweet to

commune with her after the labours of the day. In my wildest dreams of succour it would have been madness to have placed such an event as this within the compass of probability; but against all probability it had come, to raise my fancy to the highest pitch, and now the bright hope had vanished.

A sense of utter and dreary loneliness fell upon me as once again I rose to my feet. My dog was beside me. The faithful animal looked up into my face with an anxious glance, as if he reproached me for the tears I was shedding.

"No, I am not alone, my brave Tiger," I said, patting him on the head, as my steps were turned once more towards the cavern, within which the whole of that day was spent in idleness. My courage was gone—work, amusement, all were distasteful to me. The night came, and with very weariness sleep fell upon me.

Next day I was no more reconciled to my lot than on the previous night, so after breakfast, taking with me a supply of food, I sallied forth. My appearance was grotesque enough. Pistols were thrust into my belt, from which hung a powder-horn, shot-bag and sword; to a thong were attached my flask of brandy and my gourd of water; on my head was a cap shaded by palm-leaves; while on each shoulder was a gun.

The marks of blood along the pathway showed me that several of the pursuers had been wounded, which was provoking, as the discovery of the leaden bullets might remove the supernatural aspect of the event. Still, the departure of the savages from their camp showed that their discomfiture must have had a powerful effect upon them, and I had no doubt that they were now hurrying back to their own country. But it behoved me to be careful; hence my sallying forth with such a panoply of arms. On reflection, thinking that my idea of their departure might be erroneous, I resolved to leave the dog at home.

My preparations were made in expectation of a several days' exploring expedition. My plan was to advance slowly and cautiously, peering carefully into woods and valleys, lest I might be surprised. The day was nearly

spent when I reached the old camp they had occupied. Not a sign remained of their huts, nor could their presence have been suspected but for the mark of a fire in the centre of the place where their wigwams had been.

Wading across the creek which separated this part of the beach from the more tropical island, I found myself involved in a series of thickets and woods, which required some time to creep through. Night, too, was coming on, so I determined to camp, and for this purpose I chose the protecting shelter of a kind of cliff, on the banks of a small stream. Here, by the assistance of a few boughs and leaves, I made myself a hut and lay down.

My mind was ill at ease, for I fancied every minute the cannibals were stealing upon me. Besides this source of uneasiness, nature itself influenced my feelings. Night in these tropical latitudes has a peculiar sadness for the isolated wanderer. When the azure of the sky and the golden glow of sunshine cover those immense solitudes with their resplendent light, all is graceful, lovely and enchanting; but when the first stars begin to twinkle, a mysterious influence glides with the darkness over forest, valley and ravine; the long vistas of the woods become, as it were, corridors of the infernal regions; the trees take strange and lugubrious shapes, and their outspreading boughs resemble the gigantic arms of phantoms, ready to clutch the imprudent individual who shall venture within reach. As I hearkened to the thousand and one noises of the river and all but adjacent woods, and saw the shadows playing with the rippling waves, I readily understood why savages should worship the sun, a visible God to them, driving away the horrors of night, and giving joy and life with the fresh smile of morn.

I had walked a great deal and suffered much from fatigue, but the novelty of my position prevented sleep from visiting me. There seemed to be strange noises in the woods, while lower down the river murmurs arose as if some huge animal were wallowing in the water. Still nothing came near me, and I slept till morning. Then, washing in the river and eating sparingly of my provisions, I proceeded to descend its banks.

The secret of the great difference between the temperature of the two divisions of the island was very simple. My portion was exposed to the north-westerly gales, from which the other was protected by the chain of lofty rocks that divided it into two. Recollecting that venomous animals infested this glorious spot, I was satisfied to remain in my more northerly abode, in spite of the superior loveliness of the southern portion; for I could not forget the great serpent. Still at every step I was more charmed. At this moment a curious plant suddenly caught my eye.

I looked at it keenly, then tore it up by the root, which was large, long and fibrous; the stalk was erect, strong, round, hairy, branched towards the top, and rose five or six feet in height; its leaves were numerous, large, oblong, pointed, viscous, of a pale green colour, without footstalks; the branches were long, linear and pointed; the flowers terminated the stem and branches in loose clusters. I knew it at a glance; it was *tobacco*.

It may appear trivial, but in my forlorn condition, shut out from the world, separated from my kind, and suffering from a severe disappointment, the discovery was supremely gratifying. I took note of the place, and then cutting down some of the riper stalks, put them aside to make a trial. The general routine of tobacco-growing was familiar to me, more from my uncle's description than even from reading; and it was my firm resolve to carry it out to perfection, as, after all, my pipe was likely to be my only companion.

But my journey was not concluded. While about it I determined to make a thorough exploration. It was with some difficulty that I tore myself away from the delicious spot where the tobacco plant grew; but my attention was soon drawn to other scenes. Before me rose two rocks, as if to stop all progress, though next moment I found an opening, very narrow and partly shaded by overhanging trees, looking into an extensive valley.

But such a valley! From one end to the other, from side to side, there was not the most wretched sign of

wild vegetation. Its sides were rocks, from the tops of which hung foliage in abundance. Attracted by curiosity, I descended, making however towards the more pleasant scene beyond, where rich foliage invited me to seek shelter from the sun, hot, arid and overpowering in that valley of stones. There was not a breath of air, though above me the tall summits of palms and other trees waved gently in the breeze.

I was nearly over it, when suddenly turning a rock, I stood overwhelmed with surprise and terror. Close to me, not ten yards distant, was a huge elephant, feeding upon the green branches of trees that bent down from several rocks. It was an opening in the forest, but so overgrown by trees and creepers as to be quite dark. I would have turned and fled, but the elephant had seen me. He turned and came towards me, but without any evidence of haste or rage. The vast brute was in a good humour, and probably not at all afraid of so insignificant-looking a being as myself. After looking at me some time with his little eyes, he slowly bent his tremendous limbs and lay down. My state of mind was such as left me little discrimination. I was in the animal's power, but I had often heard that when not attacked, as if conscious of his own might, he will permit the presence of man, and therefore I had some slight hope of safety.

This was the first elephant I had ever seen, and I gazed at him with awe.

These stupendous creatures live in troops or herds, in a state of inoffensive quiet, unless when attacked by some of their larger and stronger animal assailants, or their more powerful and more relentless enemy—man. They delight in the boundless forest, and in the vicinity of water, where a more gorgeous and efficient shade is afforded, and they can enjoy the luxury of a cold bath and wallow, covered at once from the influence of the sun and the torment of insects. Here the herd, led by some monstrous male, spend the forenoon heat; at evening or morning venturing to the outskirts or open glades, to feed on the tender foliage, which they can pluck from a great height by means of their trunks.

They are easily alarmed and retreat to cover, except when attacked or wounded, when they turn upon their assailant with the utmost fury. The one before me was unwieldy in appearance, but I knew that his activity and speed were very great, so as to outstrip a horse. The skin was thick and hard, and wrinkled into folds about the upper part of the legs, and on the neck and breast. He was of a brownish grey colour, mottled with flesh colour. His tusks were of enormous size, and his trunk very long.

He was over ten feet in height and proportionably stout, which made him look smaller than he really was. I could not but admire the skill with which the intelligent beast used the trunk, which to him was hand, nose, and, as far as breathing is concerned, mouth also. He tore off the tender boughs and placed them in his mouth, where all the while the process of chewing was going on. His trunk occupied my attention particularly. I now understood that it was a mere elongation of the nose, but which he used with as much delicacy as we do the hand.

It was out of my power to flee. My knees refused their office, and I sank on the ground, helpless yet watchful. The elephant gave vent to a kind of friendly grunt, which slightly reassured me—as, had he intended mischief, he would not have suffered my presence so long. Then I saw a change in his demeanour. His huge ears were raised on end, his trunk seemed to sniff the air, his eyes gave forth uneasy glances, while a sullen sound emanated from his throat, like the dull roar of a torrent in some deep cave. I retreated before this warlike demonstration.

It was time, for just as I reached the shelter of a huge block of stone and crouched beside it, the animal rose to his feet. As he did so, a fearful series of yells warned me of a new and most unexpected danger, and the elephant was in a moment assailed first with arrows, then with javelins and spears, until he looked like a huge porcupine. I now understood the visit of the savages. They had come to my island in search of ivory.

The elephant would probably not have suffered much from the weapons poured upon him, had they not, as I felt convinced, been poisoned. After one fearful cry and wild rush at his enemies, who kept behind the trees of the forest, he fell to the ground and expired in great agony.

The savages uttered loud cries of congratulation, and then withdrawing their spears and arrows, moved away through the forest without even casting a glance in my direction. I had remained under cover. Without reflecting on the danger which might befall me, I hurried after them—for now I began to have a faint key to the motives of the young girl who had so abruptly left me.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SAVAGE HUNTERS.

IN a grassy plain, the centre of which was adorned by a tall tree, the savages had erected a few huts, but in such a hasty way as to convince me, that the search for ivory was the motive which had brought them to such unpleasant proximity with myself.

Despite my anxieties and excitement I could not forbear one glance at the Baobab tree. It is believed to be the largest tree in the world, and this was a gigantic specimen, nearly twenty feet in diameter. The height by no means corresponds with the thickness to which it attains. At thirty years old its diameter is two feet, while its height is only twenty-two. There was one, about which I remember reading, which was believed to be about five thousand years old. It was thirty feet in diameter and only seventy-three high. The roots are of great length.

The tree before me had such a profusion of leaves and drooping boughs as almost to hide the stem, and the whole formed a hemispherical mass of verdure, about a hundred and thirty feet in the diameter. The wood is pale coloured, light and soft, so that the wild bees per-

forate it, and lodge their honey in the hollow, and such honey is considered the best. The negroes use the trunk for a very extraordinary purpose. The tree is liable to be attacked by a fungus, which, vegetating in the woody part without changing the colour or appearance, destroys life and renders the part so attacked as soft as the pith of trees in general. Such trunks are then hollowed into chambers, and within these are suspended the dead bodies of those to whom the rite of burial is refused. There they become mummies, perfectly dry, without further preparation or embalming.

But of this tree at a future time. My eyes were now directed to the plain. Here the Indians had located themselves, evidently with the intention of making it their camping ground. The prisoners or slaves, who were about twenty in number, were engaged in packing several parcels of ivory, which they had already succeeded in obtaining during their stay on the island. There were also bales of fur and other products of the chase. The warriors and their wives were all assembled waiting for the meal, for which the hunt had given them an appetite.

The captives were concealed from the savages by one or two of the tufted bushes, and from where I was I could remark their melancholy and sad state. They were a much more comely race than those who had succeeded in conquering them, and it was a great puzzle to me, how it was that beings so far superior were subjected to a savage and brutal race.

But all my conjectures were quickly driven out of my head. About thirty or forty feet from the spot occupied by the captives, was an opening in the forest, where a perfect festoon of creeping things fell over the boughs to the ground. It was as it were the mouth of a cave, and led probably into some lovely forest glade.

While I was glancing my eye keenly around, I saw something move in that direction, and next minute my lost Indian girl crept slowly to the edge of the thicket. A quick, restless, rapid glance, showed me that I too was observed.

Then with a smile, followed by a look of anxiety, she

placed her finger on her lips, and pointed slowly towards the prisoners. The reason of her flight appeared to me explained. She had friends, perhaps relatives, among the captives, and she wished them to share the good fortune which had befallen herself.

Here, then, was a chance of escaping from miserable and solitary exile. If this girl had friends, there would probably be amongst them some who could assist me in building such a boat as might enable us to escape from the desert island. It was my duty, then, as well as my inclination, to assist her as far as in my power, in her self-imposed task.

I made cautious signs to her, and for a moment she stood irresolute. Then taking courage, probably from my pacific demeanour, she disappeared in the darkness of the forest, and soon could be heard cautiously gliding through the wood. I hurried to meet her.

Next moment we stood within a couple of yards of each other. Claspng her hands, and casting towards me the entreating glance of her really beautiful eyes, she knelt at my feet humbly and imploringly. I smiled, and, leaning one of my guns against a tree, smoothed her glossy black hair with my right hand, and otherwise caressed her as I would a timid animal I wished to tame.

At a sign from me she rose to her feet. All her fear had vanished. The tenderness of my manner had completely reassured her. There is no mistake in the human eye, and we had exchanged affectionate glances. Taking me by the hand, and peering forth from the leafy arches of the forest, she pointed to where the slaves stood. Then she made signs to me that she would go and fetch them. I laid down my other gun, and taking her two hands in mine, I shook my head.

She stamped her little foot impatiently, and made signs as if she would run away. I pointed to the savages, and again signified that she would be taken. But she energetically repudiated any fear, and pointed to me, making signs that I should kill them. Again I tried to make her understand that they were too many, but she would not be persuaded. Then it came into my head to try

my powers of persuasion against her filial devotion. I pointed to my cave; I bent low, to intimate that I would serve her; I pointed to my own clothes, and made signs which she could not misunderstand, that I would clothe her sumptuously; then I drew her beautiful head towards me, and, pressing her to my heart, I kissed her lips.

She made no resistance, but by her soft and gentle glances intimated that she would be happy enough to be my companion; and then she pointed to the prisoners. It was impossible to resist this appeal. I let her go with a deep sigh, after motioning her to be cautious of her own life and liberty. When the heart is full it is easy to be eloquent. Now it must not be understood that I was what is called "in love" with this girl. It was no such distinct feeling that actuated me; but having been so long shut out from all society, I looked with delight to the luxury of companionship, nor did I seek to conceal from myself that I infinitely preferred the prospect of a Miss to a "Man Friday."

A thousand schemes for teaching her to speak English floated through my excited brain, for civilising her, and eventually, by her aid and that of her friends, returning to my native country. But this was no time for any such considerations.

My whole thoughts were now centred on the girl, who had crouched down upon the ground, and, taking advantage of the abundant prairie grass, had begun to crawl slowly towards her old companions. I noticed that the couple to whom she had pointed were in grave and earnest conversation. They were probably speculating on the flight and escape of their child. She, meanwhile, with a slow motion like that of the snake, advanced straight towards them until she was within ten feet, when I saw the two start as a faint sound fell on my ear.

Next instant she was being clasped in their arms, while all the captives crowded round in evident astonishment and wonder. But the girl apparently wished to lose no time. I saw at once that she proposed to bring over the whole party to her views. This was startling enough at first sight, but when the reflection came to

my mind that they were evidently of a quiet and inoffensive race, while she was my friend, the one great idea of escape flashed across my mind. The young woman pointed to the forest, and appeared to be addressing the excited captives in a speech. They uttered a cry of wonder.

It was fatal.

Half-a-dozen armed savages, waving their war clubs, came bounding towards them; the girl ran; a huge fellow with a yell of mingled delight and rage flew towards her. She stood motionless with horror. The club was waved over her head. Quick as lightning my gun was levelled, and the tall savage fell back upon the sward. Firing my second musket, I then sallied towards them, a pistol in one hand, my sword in the other. This was certainly a very mad proceeding, but warrantable, for both savages and captives fled helter skelter, except one who lay dead upon the grassy plain.

They all made towards the water, and so swift of foot were they, that when, bounding along at my quickest pace, I came within two hundred yards of the shore, they were already pushing out to sea in their canoes. I caught one glimpse of the ill-fated girl and that was all. She was thrust to the bottom of a perigua, and I saw her no more.

This was double sadness for me now. It was clear that the beautiful Indian captive had become reconciled to the prospect of the home which I had offered her, and would, but for her filial duty and affection, have remained. But it would be wearisome to relate all my bemoanings and sorrowings. My soul was cruel, and when I returned to the scene of the engagement, I spurned the dead Indian with my foot, while I freely availed myself of the skins and other things they had left behind them.

Being faint and hungry, I seated myself, and with the idea of adding to my meal, examined the nice-looking roast which the captives had been preparing. It was, however, a roast monkey, at which my stomach revolted. Making a hasty meal of what I had myself, I picked up the guns and slowly returned towards my home. I may

truly say that for several days my mind was not in a fit state for any work. But it is the province of youth to be elastic, and at length I contrived to throw off the apathy which availed nothing. My first visit was to the valley of the gazelles. I found the little animals lying under a palmtree, exhausted with heat. The chief part of the valley was an open prairie, except where some trees grew round a brackish pool, and where a few palm trees lent their shade. The grass was burnt up, and afforded but little nourishment. Throwing a quantity of grass over the net which the gazelles hastened to consume with evident delight, I hurried away to my fields with the intention of pulling up some carrots and turnips for their use.

The weather had been very warm for some time, and my corn was nearly ripe, so that my thoughts were bent upon reaping it and putting it away. Thinking of how this was to be done, I reached the edge of the field, when my heart sank within me as I heard a rush through the corn, and saw that some animal or other had been devastating my unripe harvest, eating the corn, pulling up carrots and turnips, and doing considerable damage.

This was very disheartening, and in the first moment of annoyance and rage I fired. Again I heard a rush, but could not make out what kind of animal it was that had been so mischievously at work. I determined, however, to ascertain this, even though I should be compelled to watch until the whole of my crop was taken in. First, however, by means of my wheelbarrow, a load of turnips and carrots was taken to the pen in the valley, into which, aided by Tiger, I drove the gazelles; then a visit being paid to my home, I brought with me four guns and an ample supply of powder and shot.

How to pass the night now became the difficulty. After some time, however, I saw a tree in which it was possible to ensconce myself. Taking example by the apes, a roof was easily constructed, capable of keeping off the dew. By lifting some boughs, vine branches and a plank or two, a flooring was made, with an apology for sides, and here I determined to pass the night.

My mind was racked with sorrow, and though the

attack on my green fields appeared to be a minor evil, it now irritated me more than it would have done at any other period. I felt savage. Trying all the time to think of the pilfering thieves who had devastated my corn fields, my thoughts reverted in spite of myself to the young Indian girl, whose presence would have lightened even the task of watching. My dog was my only companion, and he was fastened to the trunk of the tree below.

At length I slept.

When I awoke it was not yet dawn.

On each side of me were the two woods that skirted my fields. They were, though small, impenetrable to the rays of the sun, which now rose in all its glory. It burst from the distant sea like an isle of fire, and flooded the whole scene with life and light.

Then in the distance I saw a sight which filled me with indignation. A whole army of apes came in view, guided, doubtless, by some marauder whom I had surprised the day before. They were marching directly for my plantation. An aged monkey marched at their head. By means of my telescope I could make out that the leader, though bowed by age, was tall, strong and ferocious. He seemed to know the country well, and did not hesitate one moment in his march. He was making in a straight line for my cornfields.

The monkeys followed their venerable guide with blind confidence. These atrocious immigrants came in groups of families, the mothers holding their very young ones at the breast, and leading the elder cubs by the hand; while the fathers were armed with sticks, wherewith to guide the steps of the others. Older monkeys, who were deprived of such domestic felicity, mingled with groups of antique females, the whole intent upon the great object of the day.

I was struck with a mixture of curiosity and admiration. Now and then the chief of the expedition halted and looked around; all did the same, save that, instead of being silent, they put their heads together and began to jabber audibly. Then on they came like a flood, the

chief now marching with great strides. Suddenly he halted again, and leaping into the branches of a beautiful magnolia, peered cautiously around. I kept strictly in the back ground, and moved not a muscle.

Then he gave the signal, and the whole furious troop rushed upon my cornfields. They absolutely revelled with delight, leaping, jumping and picking the ears from the stalks, they began to rub them in their hands with rapturous delight. The little ones rolled on the prairie, while the mothers fed them. I could not bear it any longer, I fired gun after gun, loosened the dog, and started with one loaded musket in chase.

Never shall I forget the rush, the yells, the cries, the screams, with which the monkeys fled across the plain. They were panic-stricken. But I had no mercy. Reaching the edge of my turnip field, I fired my double-barrelled gun. This completed the flight, except that I found myself face to face with the great monkey who had been the leader.

To my surprise, this was a perfect monster, one of the dreadful tribe of gorillas. If I could have escaped I should have done so, as he was at least half a foot taller than myself, and much more powerful. He was stout in proportion, and, except that it seemed painful to him to stand up, there was a terrible likeness to man about him, which was bewildering and alarming.

He gave a fearful growl as he raised his stick, while I had recourse to my sword-saw, having that very minute fired my gun. He showed his teeth very savagely and rushed at me. I cut him sharply across the face, which made him yell in a still more horrible way.

But next instant the monster wrenched my sword from me, threw it on one side, and at the same moment tripped me up.

Mechanically I placed my hand in my belt, and drawing forth a pistol, fired. The animal started back, awe-stricken, and prepared to fly. But at that moment Tiger, who had been chasing the flying monkeys, caught the unfortunate gorilla by the tail. The wounded animal, frantic with pain, turned upon him, and I verily believe

would have killed him in his fury, but that I shot him at the same moment through the head with my remaining pistol. The huge creature gave one horrid scream, and fell dead. I was master of the field of battle.

Picking up my gun and sword, I now scoured the plain in search of any others that might have stopped behind. But the report of my artillery had been too much for them. All had fled. Still I fired once more in the air, to warn any who might be lurking in the skirts of the forest.

This done, I returned to my fields, called away my dog, and surveyed the damage done. The next and following days I cut down everything, though not quite ripe, and took it all into my cave on my wheelbarrow.

I was determined that the monkeys should have no more of my corn or vegetables.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

IN my boyhood's days I had often dreamed of the joys of solitude, and had, while reading both the words of poets and prose writers, fancied that I too could understand its mysterious and entrancing charms. But then, this solitude must be one of your own selection—it must be voluntary. Houses and people must be at such a convenient distance that they could be reached at will. Then it is possible that man might consent to live alone for a time. But let anybody be placed in my situation, and he longs at once, and above all, for the luxury of society.

As a boy, I had read the story of every castaway recorded in the pages of "Voyages and Travels." In days gone by, when law was less stringent and the buccaneering spirit more rife, it was common for many to be set ashore on a desert island as a punishment, and I could not remember one who had ever said a word in favour of that solitude which poets, philosophers and dreamers seem to think so conducive to happiness and a fitting

state of mind. There was not one of them who would have been pleased to try the experiment in person.

I would sit for hours speculating on these memories, which came over me like a vision of the past, and the more I thought the more I worried and discomforted myself. Fortunately for me, I was too busily employed wholly to give way to idle regrets and vain repining. I had stacked my corn close to my cave, and I had piled up my vegetables under the cover of palm and bamboo roofs, but the corn had to be removed from the ear, which, as I knew no way of doing except by hand, took me a considerable time.

Then it was garnered in my store-room, though I foresaw that the time would soon come when I should require further space, while also my store-room must be protected against the rats and other vermin, which are sure to swarm wherever there is grain.

During my wars and adventures my clothes had not improved, so that I was now compelled to think of a complete change of costume. It was with regret that I gave up the idea of wearing the costume of civilised life, but the cloth which I had found in the seaman's chest was not fit for the brakes, thickets and rocks I had to climb. Lucky was it for me that the savages in their flight had left behind them certain skins, but I would rather they had left me the knowledge of how they made them so soft and pliable, as I knew that I could always find the raw material in plenty.

I now took a journey to the scene of the late contest with the savages, and on my way I visited the spot where the elephant had fallen a victim to their poisoned shafts.

A legion of ants had left their hills and were busy feasting on the vast carcase of the beast, which they had already devoured so completely as to lay its bones quite bare. I was lost in admiration, nor could I, but for my previous studies in natural history, have believed anything of the kind possible.

These animals are well known for their extraordinary industry and singular economy. A community of ants contains males which have four wings, females which

have wings only at certain times, and other females, or workers, which have no wings. Between midsummer and autumn, on examining an ant hill, a number of males and females with white glittering wings may be seen. These are strictly guarded by the workers, and if they leave the boundaries unawares, they are brought back by force.

Those which were at work on the elephant had probably migrated from a distance on a foraging excursion. I have read of swarms of such prodigious density and magnitude as to darken the air like a thick cloud, and to cover the ground for a considerable distance where they settled.

Man himself is not safe from them. When they enter a house during their fearful migrations they are not to be stopped, and before a sleeper is aware of it they swarm over his body and bite furiously, especially the *bashikouay* ants of Africa.

Aware of the danger of lingering near the column of these animals, I called my dog to my side and hurried away, and with feelings of deep grief and pain I revisited the spot where I had last parted with the companion so mercifully, as I thought, given to me in my days of solitude and affliction.

The horrid flapping of some vultures, those scavengers of the wilds, startled me, and reminded me that death had passed that way. The skeleton of the savage was bare, and there sat on the distant boughs several of the monsters waiting, one would fancy, for some fresh tragedy to fill their greedy maws. On several occasions when I had left the remains of my prey, it always surprised me to behold how soon these birds scented the carrion. In hot countries they are decidedly a blessing, and I recollected that in India they are regarded as the privileged scavengers of the land. They are birds which may truly be called voracious, cowardly and filthy. They prefer carrion to live animals. They will never fight except when driven to it by extreme hunger, and then only attack their prey in great numbers. No corruption can affect them. They seem to revel in disgusting places.

Their look is dull and stupid. A horrid odour exhales from their bodies.

The scent of the vulture is so keen that, we are told, whole droves of them crossed from Africa and Asia to Europe, after the battle of Pharsalia, to devour the carcasses. The huge condor, eternally a sentinel on the heights of the Andes, swoops down wherever human or other prey is to be found, even hundreds of miles off. Their sight, too, is exceedingly sharp.

The skins were untouched, and the ivory was still safe, but it was of no value to me. I divided the skins into four bundles. Over two of them I placed a fallen tree, while I carried one myself and tied the other on the dog, which had now grown extremely docile and willing. In this trim we returned by slow degrees to my house, not however without a good supply of tobacco. It was crude, rough stuff, but there were plenty of seeds, and it was my fixed resolve to cultivate this weed in sufficient quantities to satisfy my wants, as soon as I could find leisure.

The skins had to be made into clothes ; there were shoes to make ; a hat ; I even dreamed of an umbrella, so oppressive was the heat at times. But it seemed to me that while I was at work a pipe would be very agreeable. To accomplish this, a very small cocoa-nut was selected, from which I cut off the top and scraped the inside : it was then not much larger than the Dutch bowls which I had seen the sailors smoke. This being done, by much patience a small hole was bored in the bottom of the nut, through which I passed a slender reed. The tobacco leaves were simply dried over hot embers and were then hung, which served very well at first, though it was not the proper way of preparing them.

The tobacco smoked very well, and was a great relief to me during my arduous labours, for such above all others, proved to me the task of tailoring.

But I did not give up my whole time to this. Another short wet season was soon to be expected, and I had great plans with regard to the valley of the gazelles, a very large part of which was inclined to be damp. This

part of the soil, however, was covered with reeds, which being excessively dry, I proposed to destroy by fire. The extent they covered was about four acres, and there was not a tree near them except a large one in the centre, the name or nature of which I did not know. It was straight for some little way up, and then became very tufted.

To fire this expanse of reed was not difficult, and I hoped to do it so effectually as to destroy even the roots. The reeds were six or seven feet high, and as dry as tinder. First I collected a number of pine knots and other combustibles, then I made a pile at one end of the space, and no sooner was it set fire to than a fearful clamour arose from the shrieks of sand-hill cranes, herons and other birds, as they started wildly on the wing.

But nothing checked me. Taking blazing pine knots from the burning pile, I cast them into the jungle, which hissed and crackled and spurted as it yielded to the influence of the fierce and rapid element. For an hour this conflagration lasted, during which time I feasted my eyes on my own work. A shower of rain, as heavy as unexpected, now fell and helped to put it out.

It was now dinner time, and as Tiger manifested considerable impatience, I thought it but right to indulge him as well as myself; so, putting my gun on my shoulder, I marched off, sauntering along slowly as usual, and examining carefully everything that came in my way. We suddenly approached a small thicket, when Tiger gave a low growl and dashed forward. Then came to my ears a concert of hideous sounds, such as had not greeted me for a long time, and rushing forward I found the brave animal face to face with a huge sow, behind which were congregated some dozen little ones.

It was a huge animal, very strong and savage, and I was afraid Tiger would be no match for it unless I came to his assistance. I was about to fire at it, when the noble dog flew at the beast, caught hold of its ear between his teeth and held it fast. Quick as thought, I took from my girdle a long piece of cord, and using it as

a lasso, I threw it round the animal's legs—then with a jerk I cast her to the ground.

The sow was now powerless, and despite its furious squalling I at once proceeded in my design. Tying the feet together, just to admit of the animal's walking, I fastened my lasso to one of its forepaws, and then let it loose. Staggering to its feet, it made at the barking dog but stumbled, then I drew it onward, calling the dog to my side. The pig was obstinate, but helpless—while its litter running after it with shrill cries took up half its attention. I looked at the thicket. It was small, but one mass of nut trees and a kind of oak, which partly accounted for the presence of the sow, though I saw by the ground being turned up near where the capture had taken place that she had been rooting.

Curious to see what was the nature of its food, with a knife I turned up the ground, and to my amazement found that the pig had enabled me to make a most agreeable discovery. The esculent which the pig had been disturbed in the search of was the truffle, in the hunting up of which it is used most effectually.

But it behoved me to look to my prize. With this view I skirted the thicket, and found that, except in about a dozen places, its hedge was impassable even by a pig, and everywhere the addition of stakes, bamboos and other such wood as I could procure, would confine the animals within the range which I intended to give them. The pig was then dragged within the thicket, tied to a tree, and left to its meditations.

After dinner the business of enclosure commenced, and by the next night was carried out so effectually that it became a perfect pound. To make rails and barriers on the outside, I cut down many trees from the inside, and found in the centre of the thicket a small pool fed by a spring.

The sow was now let loose, and from that day I never wanted fresh meat. All my refuse was wheeled in the barrow and thrown into the thicket for food, and when the young ones began to feed, I shot the mother. By thinning I contrived that they never grew too many

for their enclosure, and thus I had an ample supply of fresh pork and bacon.

As soon as dusk had fallen on the island my lamps were lit, and my evening meal finished I began my task of tailoring. How to cut out a garment I had not the slightest notion, but taking my own ragged things for a pattern, with a sharp knife I cut out from the skins I had captured something like a coat and waistcoat. Then I began the sewing. My needle was a small kind of sail-maker's, used in the manufacture of coarse canvas trousers; my thread, fibres of vegetables and sinews of seals; so that when, a week after, I turned out in my new garb, my appearance was indeed ludicrous.

I had put the hairy side out. My coat, very much like a sack ripped up in front, was fastened by strings of leather; my trousers hung like two ill-shaped bags; my feet were encased in pieces of skin drawn together by a thong, a bad imitation of a moccassin; while my hat was a thatch of fur and leaves stretched above a withe, which had been bent by way of a frame.

My very dog, I thought, did not know me.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE INLAND LAKE.

BEING now comfortable and sheltered from both the heat and rain, I spent a week in collecting all I possibly could in the way of provisions, and attended to some other duties. Among the prizes which I had captured from on board the wreck, were some seeds of grasses, and these I determined to scatter over the damp field that was left after the burning of the reeds.

The ground was no longer soppy as before, but was gradually becoming dry, though some moisture still remained. Two days were occupied in scattering the seeds, after which I devoted a whole week to my fields, around which I determined to lay scarecrows enough before the next crop. Again the earth was torn up by a rake,

making me long for some animal which could do this arduous work for me. Having sown my corn, and feeling a strange desire for a holiday, I started on another journey.

This time my path was through my hidden cavern. I was in full dress with pistols and gun, a knife, a small axe, a coil of cord, some nails which were to aid me in climbing trees, with a small supply of brandy and provisions. My way was different to any I had hitherto followed. I bore more to the left, towards the higher ground. I was anxious to discover whether we were on a desert island or not, which I could only do by ascending to the summit of the hills and taking a survey with my telescope, which I always took with me.

The country as I passed along was beautiful. Every tropical plant and flower rose before me. There was the tamarind with its beautiful and variegated flowers, the flowering prickly pear, the melon-thistle like a large fresh green melon, the night-flowering cactus, the Indian thistle, and a hundred others.

I could not get along very quickly for admiration of what I saw. Several times the idea entered my head that it was there I ought to have located myself. At all events it would be pleasant to have a summer-house on this side, which I could make my residence when I wished to hunt, shoot, or fish. I began to descend through scattered trees and bushes, and presently came to a grove of evergreen pines. Passing through it I saw beyond a sheet of placid water.

I ran forward, and found that I was on the borders of a beautiful lake, surrounded by hills that rose sheer from the water's edge, covered with the richest vegetation. There were trees that I knew not, and many that I knew. Afterwards I found that the place abounded in pine-apples and guavas. Parrots, birds of paradise with their lovely plumage and peculiar cry, the ever-flickering and noisy humming-bird, were on every branch.

The water was smooth and unruffled. On one side it was bright blue and pellucid, while on the other, where fell the dark shadow of the hills, it was dark. How I

longed for a fairy-like canoe to float over that clear element. But it could not be. One of those arts which I had yet to learn was that of boat building. But time and patience will do anything.

Gazing at the softly-slumbering lake, I saw before me a promontory, as I thought, but on closer examination it proved to be an island. This roused my feelings to a very high pitch, and disencumbering myself of my gun, I determined at once to make a raft. The pine trees were light and easily cut; I had my axe and saw with me; so that the labour would not be very great.

I cut down several and floated them. They were fastened together in the usual way by means of lichens and fibrous plants, with here and there some wooden pegs knocked in. It was very rude and unwieldy, and I was compelled to give over at night-fall without having finished. A supper of dried meat and biscuit followed, then making a shelter of pine boughs, my dog and I crept under it, and passed a quiet night.

At dawn of day my raft was perfected, two rude oars fastened to its side, and then pushed off by a long pole. Tiger never allowed me to leave him a moment, so he leaped upon it, and we set out upon our perilous journey. The floating machine which bore my fortunes and those of my faithful follower was very unmanageable, and my two oars were so situated as scarcely to admit of being used at the same time.

At first, however, the shallowness of the water enabled me to pole myself along. I had a valuable freight on the raft, such as a gun, an axe, a saw—things that were not easily replaced.

Several times I paused to gaze around at the beauties of that marvellous little inland sea, of which as yet I could not see the outlet. It was a fact familiar to me that lakes do exist which have no visible means of escape for their waters, but I had no reason for believing that to be the case here.

I was determined to explore it thoroughly, and to take my time about it. The lake, to all appearance, was as circular as a cart wheel, with the island in the centre

for an axletree. The vegetation rose on all sides to the summits of the glorious hills, the bottom branches in many places bending low into the water, and concealing every vestige of shore.

The water swarmed with fish, which leaped eagerly after the flies that skimmed its surface. In the distance loomed the graceful forms of ducks and swans, while on a spur of the island I was fast approaching, stood a number of flamingoes, which, rather passive in their movements, looked like weeds or jungle.

There was not in that earthly paradise a want which might not have been satisfied, save that of society. So lovely indeed was nature in its every phase—sky, water, trees and animated beings—that it seemed possible to live there for ever, if only a companion were present, with whom to expatiate on the beauties which presented themselves to my view.

As I proceeded and began to speculate with how much ease fish might be caught, birds snared, and every necessary procured, the thought flashed across my mind that here might be a much more charming residence than my cave. But it was away from the sea, and away from all hope of that escape for which I now so eagerly longed.

My progress was very slow, though I toiled with all my power, but presently a favourable breeze sprang up, which aided me a little, and then with a shrill cry the flamingoes rose on the wing and disappeared. My raft now kept grating on the bottom of the lake, so that we were fain to leap out and tow it to the shore.

Poets and others have sung and talked of the loveliness of a tropical forest, but none, in the wildest flight of their errant fancy, could have conceived anything like this. I could not make it out at first. Fastening my raft to a small rock on the shore, I walked along the spar of stone and sand into the interior, which I gained by crawling on my hands and knees beneath the rich festoons of vines and other falling things that impeded my progress.

In the centre of the island was an open glade, spark-

ling with flowers that looked like myriad eyes of every size. A rich perfume pervaded all nature, while above, a marvellous effect was produced by trees which, rising to a vast height, crossed and interlaced their topmost boughs and formed a huge and endless summer-house. A soft and entrancing shade kept up a balmy and perfumed freshness. Here and there the roof opened and showed the blue, hot sky. The rich nature of those latitudes seemed to have adorned itself with all its graces to win the admiration of man. Cactus and aloes grew around in rich abundance.

I cast myself on the ground, unmindful of the danger of snakes and scorpions, and as I gazed about on every side, I determined to erect a summer-house, which in hot and sultry weather I could visit when I was tired of the vicinity of the sea.

Like the ant and other building animals, I was resolved to avail myself of every advantage given me by nature. I therefore selected one or two trunks of trees as the supports of my summer-house. But first it was necessary to provide for our existence. My ingenuity had enabled me to make a few hooks, which I baited with small strips of meat and put out into the water; while in a distant corner of the prairie I set one or two traps, which had served me formerly to capture small animals like wild hares.

Then I cut branches, small trunks, strong reeds and other materials, with which I made in the course of the day a very comfortable and secure hut, as far as the wind and weather were concerned. My trap did not yield anything, but the hooks were eagerly caught at by several very good-sized fish. I could not, however, catch any of the larger ones.

I lighted a fire, cooked some food, supped heartily, retired to rest in my hut with my dog by my side, and was soon fast asleep. A low growl awoke me, I started, sat up and listened. A terribly heavy footstep was marching through the bushes, while an odd kind of snorting preceded the advance of some animal. That it was big I could hear but what it was I could not imagine. Fright

had taken possession of me ; I momentarily expected the vast beast to fly at me

It was light. The moon fell in deep translucent beams upon the flowery plain, when an animal, tall as an elephant but more unwieldy, came forth from the wood, and without taking any notice of the furious barking of the dog, proceeded to crop the high grass near the edge of the plain. This continued for some time, when the monster turned slowly away towards the water, where a heavy plunge gave me notice that it had left the island. No sooner did that plunge reach my ears than I again resigned myself to sleep, nor woke till dawn.

Before thinking of anything else, the water's edge was sought, and my clothes cast off for a bathe. But where was my raft ?

It had got loose, and was careering down the lake as if carried away by a swift current. I never reflected on the consequences, but swam after it with all my strength. The raft being heavy did not make very rapid progress. But then I soon found that I was on the end rift of a current. Its power was so great that I knew it could only be caused by the suck of a waterfall. I gazed hopelessly along the waters. I saw the thrashing of the low bent boughs on what seemed the shore ; I heard the heavy sullen roar of a mighty waterfall ; and after one or two desperate efforts, I became aware that all resistance to the terrible power of that current was vain.

Death stared me in the face in that Eden-like spot, and casting up my eyes, I took one long lingering look at life and——

I was sucked into the mouth of a cavernous hollow, when, like any other dying wretch, I made a desperate grasp at the boughs which overhung the yawning gulf, and by a superhuman effort raised myself out of the fearful power of the stream.

But when my breath returned I was hardly better off. I was simply supported by the lower boughs of some trees, through which I could see that the water was carried bodily into this luminous cavern, into which it fell with a terrible and deafening roar.

By dint of superhuman efforts I contrived to crawl upwards, and to obtain a seat on a bough far out of the reach of that swift and devastating current which had so nearly been my destruction. Then I had leisure to contemplate the nature of the extreme danger I had just escaped.

Instead of the lake being wholly surrounded by hills, as I imagined, there was at this spot a gap, but so narrow as to be all but imperceptible. It was a kind of slit, across the face of which the trees grew so as to conceal it altogether.

I sat looking at the cataract for some time with a listless stare. I could scarcely recover the shock which I had received, and my heart throbbed within me as it had never throbbed before. Below, the country was arid and hilly, and at no great distance was the sea.

The question now was how to return to the island. There was I, perched like a bird upon a tree, naked as the first man who walked in Eden. Below me was a roaring waterfall; above, trees and shrubs. There was nothing to do but to swim for it.

But how was the swift and overpowering current to be passed? I was now a good and powerful swimmer; still that would not enable me to contend against such a rush of waters as came round the southern side of the small island, and swept with wild fury over the rocks. While in this state of suspense I observed that my raft had not been carried over the falls, but was coming down towards the gulf. Presently it seemed to ground upon a rock until it was wholly checked in its progress; then it swung round, and by the violence of the shock was driven in the contrary direction from that which it had been following.

The trees were fortunately so interwoven and interlaced that to crawl from one to the other was easy enough, though I was continually alarmed lest snakes or other vermin should take advantage of my defenceless position. However, by using extreme caution, I at length stood on the shore beyond where the eddies and bubbles showed that the current extended.

I was now faint, but there was no help for it. To regain my clothes, arms and provisions, it was necessary once more to swim the lake. Fortunately the water proved to be so shallow that the raft was almost reached without swimming. Then, by means of the pole and oars, I easily regained the island. With the instinct of his race, Tiger swam about without being drawn into the current, and reached the shore in safety.

On reaching the island I hastily dressed myself, made a good fire and cooked my breakfast. After this, nearly the whole of the day was consumed in improving my hut, and in manufacturing a peculiar kind of spear. Towards evening I collected a quantity of resinous knots, dry leaves and sticks, and as soon as it was dark I lighted a large fire, the blaze of which attracted great shoals of fish. Such, however, is the natural taste of man for sport, that when I saw the crowded masses of fish rushing past, I could not prevent myself from spearing a great many more than could be of any use to me.

At length, however, somewhat fatigued and indeed a little ashamed of myself, I desisted, and removing my fire more inland, I proceeded to broil some of the rich prizes I had taken, my appetite considerably whetted by my exertions. The good effects of a life spent in the natural way of early rising and regular rest, of abstinence from all evil habits and indulgences, were visible on me. I was extremely powerful, and could run with the fleetness of a dog, while my natural appetite was very different from that which is nourished by artificial causes.

Supper over, my gun was examined, the priming of my pistols looked to, and then once more I lay down in my bower or summer-house, as I resolved to call it.

I never slept without a fire, knowing how much it alarms wild beasts, and so strong was the habit that no sooner did my watch-fire burn low, than I would instinctively awake and replenish it. On this occasion a strange sleeplessness was upon me. The only explanation that suggested itself was the heartiness of my supper.

A kind of shadow of coming ill was upon me. Sleep did several times visit my eyelids, but I invariably awoke

with a start. Presently I noticed that my dog had left my side, not barking, yelping, nor even moaning in low warning tones as he would sometimes do, but cautiously and as if by stealth.

I called him loudly, coaxingly, and then threateningly; but in vain.

My dog had deserted me.

This, then, was the misfortune which, by a kind of prescience, had so darkened my spirit. Now, everybody has had a pet animal of some kind, and I am sure I shall have the sympathy of my young readers, when I confess that this inexplicable abandonment of his master by a dog, was to me a blow which seemed for a moment to paralyze my energies.

I sank back on my couch after taking a small quantity of brandy, and prepared to sleep, when I heard something rustling in the woods at no great distance. Seizing my gun I started up, and found myself face to face with something, of which, however, I could only make out two glaring eye-balls that shone across the fire, unlike anything I had ever seen before. Then it vanished.

No sleep came to my eyes that night, and in the morning I hurried on my return journey, after duly fastening my raft to the shore, nor stopped once, except for needful rest, until my cave was reached, where everything was found in order as it had been left.

CHAPTER XXX.

A MYSTERIOUS FIRE.

I HAD now been nearly one year upon that deserted spot of earth, and though my dangers had been many, though I had escaped, by a miracle as it were, from savage animals and still more savage men, I had much to be thankful for. The island was well supplied with provisions, also the lake and sea; my herd of gazelles promised the luxury of milk; my savage Papuan sow was mother to a progeny that would be very useful.

My fields of corn and vegetables, despite the devastations of birds and monkeys, had yielded manifold, while no monarch had more choice of residences and sport than myself.

What I most wanted, besides companionship, was a supply of tools, that I might improve my furniture and make a cart of some kind; also the presence of domestic animals round my residence. My dog having left me in this strange and singular manner, it was my constant idea to find some other companion.

I even went so far as to meditate on the probability of having some animal that might serve me as a steed. But this was only in very romantic moments; and when smoking my pipe after dinner, I built such castles in the air as men do who have no one to commune with on real and positive interests. My occupations were varied and sometimes arduous, for sowing and tilling the ground, even in my rude way, was a very laborious part of my duties.

Still I continued to explore the island, though something like a dread of the vision—which seemed to me more like an emissary of the Demon than anything else—restrained me from returning to the lake for some time. But as the spot was very beautiful, and was also in the centre of hills, where alone I had seen wood suitable for a large raft, which I was always contemplating as a means of escape, I at length determined just before the rainy season to explore that neighbourhood once more.

But pass a night in my bower I would not, as the memory of that startling interruption was too much for me. My gun, sword and pistols were all I took, except provisions. I was in no hurry. My planting was all over. A very large supply of refuse, coarse large carrots and turnips, had been carted both to my gazelles and pigs.

This time, again, my course was through my large cavern, where, as usual, I disturbed vast numbers of bats, but met no more serpents. When I had climbed to the summit of the rocks, I paused to gaze around. The sea was of a translucent blue, and calm as a lake.

When I neared the woods, a thousand sweet singers arose, perched on the branches of the stately trees.

Suddenly I gave a start, rubbed my eyes, and stood still in extreme astonishment; I could not believe what I saw. It was so unexpected, so sudden, and at the same time so inexplicable.

But it was true. Yes! there out in the far distance, as it were on the edge of the horizon, rose high towards the heavens a vast column of smoke. Being undriven by wind, it tapered upward slowly until it seemed to disappear in infinite space.

What could it be? where could it be? and what did it portend? A thousand wild ideas flashed through my brain. Was it a continent? was it a burning mountain? or was it a fire which had sprung up accidentally, as is often the case in low countries? I gazed with absorbing interest at the blue-black column, nor could I for many hours think of anything else. In my anxiety to make out more with regard to this mystery, I spent the whole of that day on the spot.

Then, when darkness came on, I was enabled to make out that it was a large fire on the side of a very distant hill. This I could see by means of my telescope, which was very powerful. My curiosity was now excited to the highest pitch. It was not likely that such a fire as that would be made for any necessary purpose. My belief was, that on some island at no great distance there were other unfortunates in the same position as myself, who had lighted a fire to attract the attention of any passing vessel, and that it was my duty, as well as my interest, to communicate with them, which could only be done by a huge bonfire.

The moment this idea took possession of my mind, the wildest hopes and fancies filled my brain, and, utterly regardless of the folly of what I was about, I spent the whole night in cutting down trees and bushes, and so arranging them as to insure the burning of a large thicket. Though the operation exhausted me with fatigue, I thought nothing of that, so eagerly does the mind fasten on a new idea when connected with the hope of escape.

The post I occupied was sufficiently lofty to be seen a long way off, and just as day broke, the huge mass of wet and dry timber began to crackle, spirt and flame. At this moment I became satisfied that some watcher near the beacon had seen *my* fire, and had hastily cast on a pile of damp wood, for I now saw clouds of black smoke rise from it to the heavens. Here was hope. That the others were white people I could now no longer doubt.

My joy was so excessive for a short time, that the difficulty of any personal communication with the supposed fellow-sufferers was forgotten. Then, when I came to think of the dangers of the sea, the mighty undertaking it would be to build a raft of sufficient size, and the perils of navigation, my spirits fell, and I had to trust to the idea that if they were many they might finally visit my island, and take me away with them.

Thus were the wild hopes of two whole days dashed to the ground by one glimpse of reason; so, tearing myself away from the idle and delusive prospect, I again proceeded on my journey, having wasted two days in a kind of fool's paradise.

I found my raft on the inland lake untouched. Even the mischievous monkeys had not ventured to assail it. I believe that my attack on them had taught them a certain amount of good manners. The lake was as beautiful as ever, though the heat had dried up vegetation.

Again I gazed with rapture on the terrestrial paradise which had so nearly cost me my life, and which, but for its distance from the sea, would still have been my dwelling-place.

But now I am again afloat upon the lake, and making straight for the island.

What sound is that? Surely it is the barking of a dog. My heart bounded with pleasure at the idea of finding old Tiger again. Several vigorous shoves of my pole brought me very near, and then I clearly saw the splendid fellow bound into the water and swim towards me, leaving a companion standing watching him from the shore.

I was forced to lie down to receive the attached brute's caresses. He then swam away and rejoined his companion, which stood noiselessly watching my approach.

I really had no right to be angry with Tiger for what he had done. He had preferred love to friendship; and his companion was a most beautiful little black she-wolf, as it appeared, though there was a canine mixture in her which puzzled me much.

The animal looked shyly at me first, but soon perceiving that Tiger and I were great friends, it seemed to shake off its timidity, and by degrees became not only tractable but very tame, and at last fond of me. I gave them a hearty meal of fish and flesh, for which, poor creatures, they appeared very thankful. The wolf, before age has made it savage, is easily tamed and readily assimilates itself to the dog.

But I knew this life would make Tiger too savage; so I determined, after one night spent in the place, to take them home, and to domesticate his companion.

That night I received no interruption from the animal, whatever it may have been, which had so alarmed me on a previous occasion. This, in all probability, was owing to the presence of my faithful watch dog, which, by his affectionate manner and caresses, seemed to implore pardon for having so long deserted me.

At early dawn I amused myself with fishing, and soon found sufficient for myself and companions; after which I fastened a cord round the wolf's neck—the gentle thing making no resistance—and led it on to the raft, from which I drove Tiger into the water, his gambols being of a nature which threatened to upset my unwieldy craft.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DISCOVERY OF SKELETONS.

It is certain that the discovery of my dog, and of his interesting companion, withdrew my mind from too great contemplation as to the fact that human beings, probably

of my own race and colour, were at no great distance from me. I had a faint idea of my whereabouts; but now I determined to endeavour and find out more exactly the spot on which I stood. I had nautical instruments and books, but I wanted the necessary knowledge. This, however, it would be easy to master during the rainy season; the simple elements of navigation, such as finding the latitude, and so on, being extremely easy.

Certainty was out of the question, as I did not know the time of the year nor the day of the month, an omission of great culpability on my part, but which I was not without hope of repairing. As it was, however, it was necessary to give up all theories, and spend the few days which would elapse ere the rain began to fall, in completing my arrangements for the period of confinement which must necessarily be endured.

Mechanically, I made for the seaboard, where high and massive cliffs enabled me to gaze out upon the ocean. My dog trotted on before me, while I, as a matter of precaution, led the little wolf, with the end of my lasso round its neck. For a long time I could not understand how it was that brave old Tiger had made this singular capture; but one day, when exploring the little island on the lake, I found the remains of a huge she-wolf, and the very look of Tiger, as he turned from the remains, explained the story. He had killed the dam, and then taken the helpless young creature under his noble protection.

Tiger would not march steadily in any one direction, but ran on ahead, wheeled round in circles, sniffed the ground, and came back, as if to say that the passage was safe. Suddenly he stood still—an animal of some kind darted from amid a tuft of grass and fled, followed by the dog. The wolf, which was held by a loop of rope passed round its neck, gave a jerk, got free and followed.

There is a fascination in the chase which more or less affects every man. Though I had not the slightest idea what the animal was they were in pursuit of, I cast my gun on my shoulder, and taking to my heels, ran after them as fast as I could. The ascent towards the rocks

was somewhat steep, yet I ran up it with such swiftness that few animals could have outstripped me.

Still, though I could see to the summit of the rocks, not a trace of pursuers or pursued was visible. Presently I heard the low growl of my dog, and hastening to the edge of the cliff, I looked down. My heart failed within me, for how the dog and myself were ever to be reunited, was a mystery which I really could not solve.

The animal of which Tiger had started in pursuit was evidently small, swift and cunning, probably some kind of fox. It was evidently flying to some well-known lair, and in its effort to escape had rolled over the cliff, alighted on a ledge ten feet below, and escaped by a small narrow hole, against which Tiger was now furiously sniffing. But how he had contrived to save himself on that ledge, after in all probability falling over the cliff, was inexplicable. But there he was, scratching, sniffing and whining, without any thought of his own danger.

But where was the wolf?

The animal had taken refuge in a hole which Tiger was seeking to enlarge by scratching with his paws. But it was quite clear that he could not succeed, as it was hard rock he had to contend with.

While revolving in my mind how I could descend to the dog, I heard a shrill cry, and turning round I saw the little wolf coming towards me, as if frightened at a fox which had just escaped from a hole.

This explained the position of the dog. The cunning fox, in his desperate hope of escape, had entered his lair by the wrong end. He had leaped to the ledge, at the risk of killing himself, but being immediately followed by the dog, he ran rapidly through the hole, and met the wolf which fled before him. Now I knew why it was the little animal had so mysteriously disappeared.

Still the dog kept scratching furiously, but without making any impression, so that I had to devise in my own mind the best way of aiding in his escape. To descend the face of the rock, which was perfectly perpendicular, was extremely dangerous. It might be easier to climb to him through the cavernous way, and by means of my

broadsword to open up the narrow gap at which he was working.

Descending to the place where I had seen the fox make his exit, the entrance to his wild lair proved to be a tall and narrow fissure. It was very dark, and I hesitated. Presently, peering into the gloom, my eyes became gradually accustomed to the darkness.

The hole, or fox's lair, trended upwards. But I resolved not to venture without a light, so returning towards a thicket, I cut myself some large pine boughs, to which I fastened a number of cones and pine knots. Having lighted this I began my ascent of the narrow cavern.

My feelings may be conceived when I clearly distinguished a flight of steps—steps as undoubtedly made by human hands as were the pyramids of Egypt. In my astonishment I nearly fainted. Somebody, then, had been here before me—so one other being had visited this island of desolation, and made his residence in this wild cavern in the rocks. Could it be possible that this other hermit of the wilds still lived and dwelt within this dark and gloomy place?

I advanced upwards, with awe intermingled with hope. I had my saw-sword by my side, and my large horse-pistols in my belt. But I did not feel as if I should need them. Of whatever nation or race the solitary might be, we could not be enemies. Nothing could turn two human beings against one another when society was the one blessed thing coveted by both.

The passage was very narrow and winding, and the steps were only cut where they were really useful in aiding the ascent. At length the cavern widened, just as a kind of platform was reached, and the whole mystery of the place was revealed.

It was a square room, which by art had been made tolerably comfortable. It was lighted from several small fissures in the rock, while around were shelves, a rude cupboard, a bedstead, chairs, a table, and several other articles of furniture. But that which chiefly astonished me—nay, thrilled me for a moment with horror—was

the ghastly story revealed by the sight which presented itself to my eyes.

Beside a rude fire-place, on which still stood the ashes of a fire long extinct, there sat in an arm-chair a skeleton, with its head leaning back in the attitude in which death had fixed its living owner. Not a trace of flesh or skin remained, not even a shred of the clothes which must have once covered this human form.

At the feet of this ghastly memorial of the past was a shapeless heap of bones, which a hasty glance told me were those of a dog, whose presence on the island partly explained the somewhat mixed breed of my little wolf.

In a large wicker cage, itself mouldering into dust, was a mass of bones and feathers, which clearly belonged to the parrot tribe.

On the table was a rusty knife beside a platter, on which was rudely cut a date. I read it; evidently it had been cut by the trembling hand of a dying man. It preceded my arrival by twenty years. A rusty old gun, an empty powder horn and a rude shot bag hung near the fire; while a very old harpoon, some ancient fish-hooks and rotten nets showed the habits of the solitary.

How my heart beat at this startling picture of man's nothingness, and how deeply the conviction stole over me that such must, at a later or an earlier period, be my fate also.

I looked at the whole scene with a kind of solemn reverence. I felt, as it were, in the presence of a great mystery. What had this man not undergone? What had been his life, his adventures, his thoughts? Had he died from misery and starvation, abandoned by all save the faithful beast which crouched at his feet? or had he lived to a good, serene old age, and died calmly and happily?

But here all speculation was vain, and sadly and mournfully I went on my way, still ascending in the direction where the dog was hard at work. It was not far off. To my astonishment the ascent ended in another chamber, a kind of store-house, as could be seen from mouldy jars, broken wicker baskets, and little piles of

what in days gone by had evidently been grain, hams and other provisions, but of which nothing now remained but mildewed bones, that turned to dust when touched.

The hole which my dog was vainly striving to enlarge, was a kind of window to admit air and light. However, by means of my sword, I was able to displace a stone or two, when the delighted animal came tumbling in, and was greeted with great delight by his female companion. They were then about to follow the scent of the fox, when I sternly called them back and slowly descended the cavern, where this strange and bewildering discovery had been made.

The adventure with the Indian girl did not excite in my mind more feelings of regret, than did the circumstance of this individual having lived and died in this miserable and obscure place, abandoned wholly, except by a faithful animal and his God. Doubtless, his sojourn on the island had been long; and not once, probably, had even the sight of one of his race greeted his eager eyes.

I passed through that solemn chamber of death with a kind of awe, such as one feels before the veil of a temple. My eyes, however, took in the whole scene once more, and then an idea flashed across my mind. I would bury the remains of my predecessor. On the bed was a large and coarse blanket. This determined me. I descended from the cavern, and by means of my sword dug a shallow grave. I then ascended to the room again, and carried down, not only the bones of the man, but those of the animals, and I laid them reverently in the pit.

I then took an inventory of the goods. There was scarcely anything of the remotest use to me. The gun was rusty; the knife was worn out; but on removing a kind of skin wrapper which lay upon a shelf covered with a coating of dust, I found a pile of manuscript written on some peculiar kind of paper, the material of which I could not make out. The colour of the ink was faded and indistinct, but I had no doubt that by perseverance it might be deciphered.

Delighted with this discovery, I wrapped it up with

extreme care, and once more returned to the open air. Then I reverentially placed a cross over the last remains of the unfortunate being, and after promising to myself to visit the place again, I went my way.

Home, be it even a cavern fashioned by nature, is dear to the heart of every man, and I was glad to reach mine. Nor did I leave it again for some time, as the wet season now set in. But I cared not, my provisions were in abundance; I had the companionship of my dog and wolf, which I found every day more canine than I at first expected; and then I had my manuscript to decipher.

This was the occupation of my evenings, and never, during the whole course of my chequered career, did evenings pass so swiftly or so agreeably. It was a narrative such as I had never read before. The first line made me literally turn pale, and a sense of choking came over me which will not be easily forgotten. But I had no leisure to give to the unheard-of sorrows of one who had preceded me on my island; who, in the course of a singularly versatile career, had passed through trials to which mine were as nought, and who, from the hour of leaving home to that on which the pen fell from the trembling hand, encountered adventures such as man or woman could scarcely have conceived to be possible.

My rainy season was unusually short. My store-rooms were improved, my bed and sitting rooms made as comfortable as possible, my clothes mended and patched, and everything, in fact, done to prepare for another campaign. My mind, too, was stored with many a useful hint from the notes of the unfortunate being who died under such melancholy circumstances. Besides, my books of navigation were keenly studied, that I might carry out my great idea of not only finding the latitude, but arriving at a correct solution of the day of the month.

When the warm sun broke forth—when the birds began to sing—when the waters ceased their rise, and the heavy dewdrops dried upon every tree—I sallied forth. My first visit was to my plantation. It was progressing

favourably; the young shoots were already up, and everything looked bright and promising. My pigs were ravenous; so, without more ado, I shot the old sow; and, bad as it may appear in a human point of view, she was immediately devoured by her own young.

I had confined my dogs at home, as there was a probability of an addition to my establishment; so I advanced alone towards the valley of the gazelles. Three delicate little creatures had been added to my herd, and the old ones seemed to hail my visit with joy. I fed them as well as I could, and was delighted to see that the plain where the reeds had been cut down was now covered with a rich crop of grasses.

Every day it became more and more clear that my physical nutriment was provided for, while there was now before me the prospect of two delicious luxuries—milk and butter. But my natural studies had enlightened me sufficiently to make me aware, that there were animals on the island far more likely to suit my purpose in this way than the little gazelles, for I had seen their footsteps.

Having examined the gazelles, I advanced slowly towards the sea. My telescope was slung by my side. My thoughts were bent on that column of smoke which had so startled me six weeks before, and the presence of which seemed to speak of the residence of other white people—perhaps my own family, my sister, father, cousins—on an island at no great distance. I went slowly up the bank towards the edge of the cliff.

What tapers yonder within a quarter of a mile of the shore? The masts and half-furled sails of a large and splendidly built brigantine. I sank on the sward in utter astonishment and surprise, quite unable to overcome the wild sensations which bounded through my heart.

Then I took my telescope and peered down upon the waters below.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FUGITIVE.

No criminal reprieved from the scaffold, nor a sinking, dying wretch, dragged from the depths of the sea by some kind and helping hand, could have felt more relieved, rejoiced, or delighted than I did for some few minutes. The telescope shook in my hand, nor could I for a considerable time steady it so as to be able to distinguish anything.

The vessel was of that mixed sort which appertains both to the brig and the schooner, built in this way for the sake of swiftness, as being suitable both for sailing before and on a wind, and, in fact, for running almost in the wind's eye, as might a taut and perfect schooner.

Everything about her was evidently calculated to promote speed. Her spars were tapering and elegant, with the slightest rake in the world aft; her running gear and standing rigging were in perfect order, not a rope being out of place, while her canvas, white and unpatched, had been renewed regardless of expense.

She had just anchored; for, as I gazed through my telescope, I saw that there were men aloft occupied in fastening the reef points and gaskets, while the vessel itself was swinging round on a spring cable to face the tidal current. There were a great number of persons on her deck, and my telescope indicated that though whites predominated, still there were some very dark and swarthy.

Now I saw they were hoisting out boats. In the first place there was the long boat, which was quickly loaded with casks. I knew they had come to my island to get water. A strange suspicion flashed through my mind. All this time I had been so deeply engaged in viewing their movements, as if they had been a set of play-actors, that I scarcely allowed myself to think. The sight of fellow-creatures—of an European ship, absorbed my every faculty.

Nobody ever watched the varied scenes of a tragedy with more intense, more absorbing interest. I never asked myself what those men in loose cotton jackets, Panama hats and striped trousers, might be. They seemed to be Christians, and white men—what more could I wish or desire?

The long boat was out, and moored to the ship's side by a painter; then I saw they were hauling out two cutters to accompany the other, for they no doubt fancied the island was inhabited by ferocious natives, instead of by a harmless and hopeful white man.

Then—oh, how wildly did my heart beat at the sight—I saw three men, naked and perfectly black, plunge headlong into the water, sink, rise again and strike out for the shore. Now I knew what had previously been only a suspicion—it was a slave ship.

A loud cry, which reached even to the top of that lofty cliff, resounded through the air, and then four or five musket shots were fired in succession, but without doing any execution. The shore was so near that escape now seemed easy, as once the dense tropical thickets were reached, nothing could be easier than for men trained to hardships to conceal themselves from inaccustomed and less active white men.

The shore towards which the negroes were swimming was about a quarter of a mile to my left, where the rocks ceased, and a small bay was wholly lined by trees, several of which were baobabs, while below, bushes of a smaller character rose in great profusion. There were prickly shrubs, too, through which it was by no means easy to penetrate.

Meanwhile, the swimmers were advancing without the slightest interference on the part of the crew of the vessel. They were, however, slowly but surely getting ready their boats, into which many armed men descended. Then I saw a tall man jump down the gangway, followed by two huge black hounds fastened together.

I shuddered. All my visions of delight at the sight of white men vanished, for I knew that, instead of falling upon peaceful traders, or even upon privateers, my island

was invaded by men, who, born and bred to iniquitous and foul traffic, were utterly beyond all remorse, good feeling, or generosity of purpose.

But why that shout—that loud, uproarious cry?

I moved my telescope and looked, but only two swimmers were now contending with the sea, breasting the waves in the hope of freedom—of any fate but slavery. Of the third I caught one glimpse in the empurpled water as he was drawn down by a huge shark.

Horrible is the fascination of such fearful tragedies. I could not take my eyes from the scene, and when the two swimmers, panting for breath, seemed just about to reach the shore, I believe a shout escaped my lips. Alas! they were again quickly silent, for at that instant a second negro on the very threshold, as it were, of life and death, was caught by another hideous monster of the deep and greedily devoured.

The third rolled insensible on the strand, out of reach of the fierce animals, and there lay some minutes. Then he rose, glanced at his rapidly approaching masters, gazed upwards at the rocks, and plunged into a deep thicket overswept by the huge boughs of a succulent baobab.

Now many strange thoughts entered my mind. To discover myself to these inhuman monsters—these dealers in human flesh—was abhorrent to my feelings. It would be necessary to join in their monstrous views, or else to perish by their hands.

What, then, was the course to be pursued? Every impulse of my nature decided me on saving the poor black if it were in my power, though how it was to be done was another question. It would be fatal on my part to draw either the black or the whites to my part of the island where they would discover signs of cultivation. There could be no doubt that a general search of the island would take place, which could scarcely fail to be fatal. I knew that such men were not to be trusted if I gave myself up, still less so if I were captured after playing hide and seek.

It was fortunate, then, that they had not landed on

the part of the island on which was my cave, my gazelle preserve, and the pen in which I kept my pigs.

While communing with myself I turned in the direction taken by the black. My mind was made up. The dogs, if I kept out of sight, would not take any notice of me, as they were only taught to track the blacks, but if they should, my gun would soon bring them to reason. As a matter of course, I knew that the negro would be as frightened of me as of his captors, but that was a feeling which I had to overcome.

I turned rapidly towards the plain across which I had reason to believe he would start on his way to the hills, where alone, in almost inaccessible caverns or on lofty and precipitous rocks, he could hope to be out of reach of his enemies. Using my telescope as soon as I was at the foot of the rocks, I saw him. He was resting, as if to prepare for the encounter he fully expected.

He was tall and very powerful. It was a question whether, but for the possession of fire-arms, I should have ever thought of subjugating him. My theory was to subdue him by force first, and then to tame him by great and continued kindness. He held a small tree in his hand—a kind of hickory, which he had hastily torn up by the roots, and from which he was breaking off the branches and roots. I put down my telescope and cautiously advanced.

Then I saw the negro turn in the direction of the sea, and swing his club with intense hatred in his looks. He was close to a small stream, in which he had been bathing his feet. Now he stooped, and took a long draught, which probably he had not done for some time, water being on board these fearful slave ships the greatest of luxuries.

My own sufferings alone on that desert island had made me sensitive to those of others, and I looked with intense pity on this denizen of the free wilds of the African interior, torn away from home and family to serve the cruel and unfeeling planters of the New World. I remembered my father's stories of these savages, dwelling round some treasured well in the desert, satisfied

with the possession of a cow, but too willing to barter ivory and gold dust for the meanest of manufactured baubles.

The negro had laid himself flat on the ground to drink. I saw him start, listen with his ear to the ground, then rise, and again shaking the club at his pursuers, dart away from them at a rapid pace.

Then I heard the deep baying of those horrible hounds, which is of itself enough to terrify the bravest and stoutest heart. The spot selected by the negro by which to make head for the mountains, was a desert on a small scale, but like most of the deserts spoken of by travellers, not wholly devoid of vegetation. It was simply badly watered and somewhat dry, being covered with grass and a great variety of creeping plants, with here and there a bush or tree. It was very flat for about three miles, when the slope of a hill commenced, covered with a rich mass of verdure.

To the left of the negro there might be seen a small drove of antelopes feeding upon the thick grass which grew on that plain. It rose in tufts, with bare spaces between. I noticed that the negro took great strides over the grass, alighting as much as possible on the bare soil, as if he thought the dogs would find it more difficult to follow the scent.

Now I saw the chase coming up. There were two huge dogs, which lugged, tugged and tore frantically at the leashes by which they were held, lest their rapid pace should take them out of sight. I had never seen a more motley set of ruffians than those who led the dogs, and not a feeling of sympathy towards my kind was awakened in my bosom when I saw them pass me, and heard execrations in my native tongue. Their broad Panama hats, red flannel shirts, loose striped trousers, with the long lasso whip they carried, indicated that they were American supercargoes, or overseers of the slaves—perhaps planters trading on their own account.

The rest were Portuguese, Brazilian, and English—these I heard anathematizing the negro's limbs in the most energetic manner.

The negro saw them. He paused, as if to measure the force that was arrayed against him, and as he did so he raised a shout of defiance. He knew the white man well. He had nothing to expect from him. Nothing he could do would make the pale face more exasperated against his colour and race.

He seemed, indeed, by his manner to nerve himself to the stern alternative—escape or death.

The men fired a musket or two in pure recklessness, for they could not reach him. I believe that, had I been armed to the teeth—that is, with several guns and my pistols—I should have tried to destroy the whole party; but my natural impulse was restrained by prudence.

The dogs still dragged furiously as the pursuing party, with a wild and savage halloo, started off in chase. There were nearly a dozen powerful men, armed with whips, knives, guns and pistols, pursuing one poor naked, unarmed savage. But these wretches hunt a black man as they would a wild beast.

The plain being dotted here and there with trees, enabled me, as soon as the party of hunters had passed, to follow without much danger of discovery. Nor even if they should observe me did I seem to care, for I knew I was fleeter of foot than any of them, while even if the hounds could be persuaded to track me, my arms would soon bring them to bay.

I started off in the track of the men hunters as soon as they disappeared behind a grove. My movements were so quick that when I halted at this thicket and took up the telescope, I saw the negro just dashing into the woods, while the slavers were with difficulty keeping the hounds from turning aside after the drove of flying antelopes, their appetites being in all probability whetted by spare diet on board ship.

A lash from the long whips brought them back to the trail, which they again followed with their unerring instinct. In five minutes more they, too, were concealed beneath the leafy arches of the forest. I waited a few minutes ere I attempted to follow, as some of the pursuers might halt. Seeing, however, that they did not, I once

more started at a rapid pace, easily following the howling of the dogs and the footsteps of a dozen men upon the plain.

The ascent was steep. Here and there the undergrowth was thick and tangled; in other places, only a few creeping plants surrounded the trees; but everywhere it was difficult to advance. At length, however, I reached a comparatively level plateau, and stood appalled at the scene before me.

The negro in his utter ignorance of the country had placed himself in a most terrible position. On reaching the edge of the plateau, at the the higher end of which I stood, he had run forward, probably with his head downward, as is much their habit. There was for a few minutes a trifling descent, and then a rise. Then the grassy plain continued sloping gently upward, until he was suddenly brought to the edge of one of those singular fissures which seem to yawn beneath the feet of the traveller, and into which many have stepped ere they were aware of their danger.

It was, indeed, a fatal mistake, for the dogs and their still more savage masters were not a hundred yards behind him. What then was to be done? He looked slowly round, saw his yelling, shouting enemies, and then glanced below at the awful chasm, at least twelve or thirteen feet across. His mind seemed made up. Slowly he walked towards his captors, as if by quiet surrender to propitiate their mercy.

Then, with a terrific cry like the wild whoop of the American Redskins, he flew rather than ran, gathered himself strangely up and leaped high into the air. Great God! he totters on the brink, he is fallen headlong into the pit below—but no!—with a mighty effort he cast himself forward on his face, and when the howling dogs and yelling pursuers came up they saw him not. I could. Scarcely taking time to recover his breath, he was rolling himself along the slope towards the forest.

Loud and furious were the execrations of the slave-hunters. They looked up, they looked down. There seemed to be an easy passage upward, and away they

started, while I, skirting the trees, rapidly turned the lower end of the fissure. When I did get round, the negro was nowhere to be seen, while the pursuing party were slowly following the edge of the chasm: the men talking, the dogs sniffing the air, casting their bleared eyes around, and lolling out their tongues.

They every now and then stopped to smell the ground, and then suddenly set up a joyful whine; they were upon his track. The pursuers chuckled loudly. They cared not for a little trouble, so that they wreaked their vengeance—and well they knew that, sooner or later, they must come up with the hunted wretch.

Again making use of the skirts of the wood, I followed, in several instances finding the assistance of my telescope valuable in saving myself from the windings and detours the dogs were forced to make by the wily negro. Presently the chase again came out upon an open plain, and I saw that the black was becoming wearied. He dragged his legs, he glanced every now and then over his shoulder, and when I saw the fierce and savage dogs let loose from their leash, I felt that all was over.

With a savage roar, or rather howl, away they flew like arrows from the hunter's bow, nor could I imagine how the poor man could in any way hope to defend himself.

On the other side of the plain, and near to the dense forest, was a vast mowana or baobab, surrounded by euphorbias. This was, perhaps, the most mighty specimen I had ever seen of this huge tree. It must have been eighty or ninety feet in circumference. On sped the negro, the dogs close behind him—ay, not twelve yards in his rear—when suddenly he disappeared, and they came to a standstill.

The prodigious tree projected its vast limbs out on all sides, and some of these seemed, so extensive had been the growth of both, to be supported by the euphorbias. At the foot of one of these the dogs halted. The negro, aided by the hanging creepers, had vaulted aloft, and disappeared in the leafy masses of the huge and mighty baobab.

Again were the dogs at fault, and so vast is the size of these trees, and so dark is their shade, I fancied now that unless the negro were starved out, he might escape. But the slave hunters knew better. No sooner did they come up, than they drove the dogs from the foot of the smaller tree, and made them go round the baobab in a circle. The dogs were well trained to this; and soon giving mouth, I knew they were on the trail again.

I had rapidly skirted the plain, and could see the negro crouching on the ground, and yet moving at a rapid pace. No sooner, however, did the dogs make him out, than up he leaped, darted into the air, waved his club, and rushed away openly.

All this time I had followed the chase with a wild kind of interest, which carried me forward without my being aware of how much I was fatigued. My limbs, however, were now stiff, my lips were parched and my senses weak. I would not give up yet, but taking a good draught of weak brandy and water, and eating a bit of cake, I again hurried forward.

The negro, I could see through my telescope, had turned my way. The forest towards the more distant hills was evidently tangled. I hastily hid behind a tree overhung by the rich, wild vine, and unslung my gun, looked to the priming of my pistols and waited. The negro might have been a hundred yards from me, the dogs not twenty more, some of the men in sight—when the poor hunted wretch turned at bay.

An awful howl showed what a terrible blow he had dealt to the first savage beast. But vain was his courage. They soon had him down, and before the wretches in pursuit could come up, his life was ebbing through his ghastly wounds. Wounded, dying almost, the negro looked up at the cruel white tormentors of his race. I crept nearer.

“He’ll never see the ship again,” said one fellow.

The supercargo scowled at him, and raising his whip, began to lash the dying wretch who had thus escaped the degradation and suffering of slavery. The negro gave one groan, and then was silent, nor could all the execra-

tions or lashes obtain from him another word. The horrible cruelty of this man, however, exasperated me beyond all measure, so that, losing all discretion, I fired both my barrels of heavy shot, and then took to my heels, nor did I stop until I had put many miles between myself and the spot where this frightful tragedy had occurred.

It was night when I halted on the summit of a hill that was thickly wooded nearly all the way up, and partially so at the top. Here I lay down, thoroughly wearied and exhausted. My fatigue was so great that I could scarcely eat a mouthful, but very imprudently quenching my thirst with the whole of my gourd of brandy and water, I fell asleep, to dream of fierce and savage dogs, of hunted negroes, and of murder done by a white man on white men like himself.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

I BECOME DELIRIOUS.

I FLED, as Cain might have done when his hands were hot with the blood of Abel. My abhorrence of the crime perpetrated on the poor black did not disguise from me the fact that I had no right to be the avenger. Hence the terrible sensation which seemed to pursue me, as dashing wildly away into the hills, I felt pursued, not by living men, not by hounds in mortal shape, but by some mighty Nemesis that lowered on me from the heavens above, and glared at me from every hollow and abyss I passed.

Sleep was worse than waking. A nightmare of fear and awe was on my soul. When I awoke, as the grey dawn fell upon me, my throat was parched, my lips were dry, my tongue swollen, while, though my skin was scorching, my whole frame was taken with a quivering and shivering, which at once told me I was in a burning fever. Again my reason deserted me, nor did I wake for some time.

I had evidently been ill some days, for I was prostrate from weakness and exhaustion. I lay on a shelf of rock, beneath an overhanging cliff, but where, I had not the most remote idea or conception. I was in the midst of arid hills and of places almost wholly devoid of vegetation. I had no gun, pistols, nor telescope.

There was no pain about me. I had not cut or bruised myself, but my sensation of thirst was dreadful, while gradually I became aware of a feeling of intense hunger. During my delirium I must have found water; indeed, the state of my garments proved that I had plunged into streams in my burning fever.

Some creeping plants, which, having their roots buried far beneath the soil, feel little the effects of the scorching sun, were the only kind of vegetation which I could perceive. The number of these which have tuberous roots is very great, and naturalists have proved that their structure is intended to supply nutriment and moisture during long drought.

Here was a plant not generally tuber-bearing, which became so under circumstances where that appendage was necessary to produce a reservoir for preserving its life. I subsequently found, in my exploration of the island, that the same happened to a grape-bearing vine.

The plant, which grew in the shadow of the cliff, bore a scarlet-coloured eatable cucumber when quite ripe; but what I now desired was the root, at which I dug with an energy and perseverance which, in my weak state, astonished myself. I had a knife. At my feet was a plant with linear leaves, and a stalk not bigger than a crow's quill. I dug perseveringly, and though I was a long time about it, and was forced to pause several times, the feeling that I was battling for life kept up my courage.

At length I came to a tuber, which was almost as large as the head of a child, from which I hastily removed the rind, and found a soft pulp, with a liquor in its cellular tissues, which I hastily and thankfully swallowed. It was, indeed, delightfully cool and refreshing, and doubtless contributed to save my life.

Resting a little after this terrible exertion, I rose to my feet. Desolate, indeed, was the spot which in my delirium I had chosen for my resting-place. In what part, how far from my home, and in what direction it lay, I knew not; but presently a careful examination of the sun's position determined me in my course.

How I had crossed those pitiless rocks, how I had found those bleak and narrow passes, while flying, doubtless, before my own panic-stricken thoughts, I could not say. There is a Providence for the madman, and mad I was, to all intents and purposes. But now weak, tottering and ill, I crawled instead of ran. Frightful precipices, steep hills, cavernous holes, met me at every step, but not one rill, one brook, one single drop of water—that most blessed of all things to man in a state of nature.

I cast my eyes on every side with deep and earnest longing. Nothing, however, met my gaze but sand and stunted trees, except a little a-head of me a grove of mopana trees. Towards these I made my way. They formed a thick belt. Suddenly I felt a sensation of delight, for the setting sun cast a beautiful blue haze over what appeared to be a small and lovely lake. I roused myself, and after unheard-of exertions, I contrived to get through the belt. Then I saw that I had made a discovery which would have delighted me at any other time.

It was a salt pan, over which hovered one of those mirages which so deceive and inveigle the weary traveller. This mirage was marvellous; it was perfection. No imagination was necessary to realize the exact picture of large collections of water; the waves danced along, and the shadows of the trees were vividly reflected beneath the surface. I turned away in mortal agony.

My sufferings on my first arrival on the island were intense indeed, but not like these. The wind came warm and scorching on my weakened frame, from hot sandy plains and bare rocks, so that I could scarcely breathe. Then, at last, I descended slowly towards a plain. At the foot of the rocks there was what appeared

to be an old river bed, with here and there tufts of reeds, nearly concealed by sand. Now, I was quite aware that reeds will not grow except in the vicinity of water, so, kneeling down, I began to scrape out the sand beside the reeds.

I had not far to go. At a very little distance from the surface was a hard stratum of incipient sandstone, along which flowed a small quantity of clear, cool and refreshing water. This is the way that water is found in the desert, either the result of rain, checked in its descent by the sandy stratum, or flowing underground from springs in the hills.

My thirst quenched, every nerve in my body was brought into requisition, to enable me to reach the skirt of a small forest, where it was my resolve to pass the night. I was completely defenceless, weak from hunger, prostrated by fever, so that, even with fire-arms, I could scarcely have defended myself against the beasts of the field.

The wood was small, and skirted by a rich fall of vines. These grew round the trunks of the trees, their tendrils clinging to the branches until, from their great weight, they fell over. To my great delight this was a genuine grape vine, and covered with rich and delightful fruit. As I knew this to be an excellent restorative from debility produced by heat and exhaustion, I ate freely, and then, without fear, I crept under the rich foliage and slept.

The thickly-leaved trees and creeping plants kept the dew off me, so that I awoke much improved. My whole frame seemed imbued with additional energy. I could walk erect. The first use I made of my strength was to cut a stick with which to assist my progress.

After a breakfast of grapes, which, though not sufficiently restorative, were pleasant to the palate, I hurried as fast as my steps could carry me through the wood, which was more scattered and torn down than in my part of the island. Gradually, too, it became thinner and thinner, until through the trees I could discover that I was coming out upon an extensive plain.

As the day advanced, the heat became overpowering, my pulse beat with amazing force, and felt as if thumping against the crown of my head. The trees and long grass excluded the air, so that not a breath reached me. I halted and gazed upwards, to see if a breath moved the tops of the taller trees. Not a branch, not a leaf shook.

Then, oh heavens! I heard, distinctly heard close to me a loud and maniacal laugh. It was a fierce, quick, angry laugh, but still a laugh. I turned wildly round and gazed frantically in every direction, but could see nothing. I clutched my stick, loosened my knife in my sheath, and stood ready.

"Ha! ha! ha!" Again that awful laugh, but this time with repeated echoes, and much nearer. In my great alarm I shouted to them to come on, and not to conceal themselves behind the trees like cowards. No sooner was my voice raised, than swiftly rushing past me came several animals, of the size of wolves, uttering their doleful cry as they fled. It was a pack of laughing hyenas, animals which imitate that one inflection of the human voice so admirably as to deceive any but the most practised ear.

But before I recovered from my astonishment, I was more than ever bewildered, as I gazed right and left, to behold the whole forest as it were in motion. All animals, during the fierce tropical heats of the day, generally conceal themselves, coming forth only night and morn. But now, this sudden, dry, hot, scorching wind had roused them. Some influence which I could not understand, was taking them all in one direction. As I stood on a small hillock, sheltered by several thick trees, and gazed at the scene before me, I rubbed my eyes several times to convince myself I was awake. From my post of observation I could see lions, hyenas, jackals, antelopes, large deer, and other animals, coursing past like the phantasmagoria of a dream. They took no notice of each other. But this was no wonder. I soon found that, tormented by the furnace-like heat of the day, they were all under the influence of burning, parching thirst.

I have seen a stampede, where every variety of animal of the mountain, plain and forest, has, under the influence of a panic, rushed in one furious troop together; but I never saw the animal creation proceed so steadily towards one point as did these many varieties—mostly inimical to one another. I myself caught the contagion, and hastened to the skirt of the forest and to the edge of the plain.

The first glance told me what the mystery was—there is an instinct in animals which I do not attempt to explain. These varied and incongruous beasts, roused in their lairs by the fierce noontide heat, had one and all taken their way in the only direction where, in the absence of water, they could quench their raging thirst.

The whole plain was covered with the *cucumis caffer*, or water-melon. This extraordinary plant literally hid the ground, as it does vast regions in the interior of Africa. Animals of every sort and name, including man, rejoice in the rich supply.

Thirst is almost as great a means of taming wild beasts as hunger, and when I advanced into the plain and partook of one or two melons the eager animals did not even turn their heads. I found the melons delicious. Their fragrant and wholesome juice spread like a balm through my frame. My tongue seemed to return to its proper size, my lips recovered their moistness, even a sense of renewed vigour appeared to pervade me.

It may readily be believed that, once my appetite was satisfied, I did not remain long in the neighbourhood. There were too many hungry beasts about, and it occurred to me that when their thirst was quenched they might discover they had another form of appetite.

Late in the evening I managed to crawl into the boughs of a thick tree at no great distance from the ground, where I contrived to obtain a night's sleep. My breakfast consisted of some berries and a red cucumber, which, though of a bright scarlet colour, was quite ripe.

I moved all that day at almost a snail's pace, and in the evening I came in sight of the spot where I had left my gun, telescope, and other articles. No sooner had I

obtained possession of fire-arms than I looked around in search of game. Presently I saw something move in the thick foliage of a tree. Impatient of delay I fired, when half a dozen birds, very like turtle-doves, came fluttering to the ground.

I sprang towards them, killed those which were only wounded, and then, rejoicing at the prospect of a broil, I hastened to make a fire. This was not a tedious operation, and in a quarter of an hour my birds were plucked, split open, and on my ramrod before the fire.

But what is this? I had scarcely got everything ready for my evening meal, when a deep, loud bark fell upon my ear, coming nearer and nearer every moment, and suddenly Tiger came bounding towards me. He had been carefully fastened in a room in my cave, with a tolerable supply of food near him. How he had found me, except by hearing the report of the gun, I could not say. Then came the question as to how he got loose. Had those ruffians upon whom I had fired in a moment of impulse and passion found my cave and devastated it?

But reflection was useless, so I resolved to wait till the next day, and content myself with what fortune had provided for my present use. Having shared my supper with my dog, I fell asleep, and did not awake until after daybreak. After a hurried meal I started, full of anxiety to learn the truth. Tiger seemed as impatient as myself, and a forced march brought us, by nightfall, within sight of my cave. Then Tiger started off at a gallop, leaving me to follow at my leisure.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE LAND TORTOISE.

WHEN I came to my cave, I found that Tiger had contrived to make his escape in a most ingenious manner. By scratching and biting he had undermined the partition; then having got a purchase below it, he removed a bamboo, and thus escaped.

The food that I had left being exhausted, and the she-wolf having had a litter of puppies, Tiger had amused himself by hunting down animals, such as hares, rabbits and others, with which to supply the she-wolf in her trouble. Water was abundant, as they had access to the stream that filled my pool. In this way the brood had been brought up. They were still blind, but rather fat.

When I came in Tiger looked up at me with a pride I easily understood. He had evidently been the means of saving them from that worst of deaths—starvation.

My first care was to restore myself to health. My work on medicine was carefully consulted, and its advice followed as much as possible. I then made up my mind to rest wholly from arduous labour for some time, nurse myself, and thus restore my energies.

I visited my valley of the gazelles, and brought away one, which I killed, though not without reluctance; but I required broth and fresh meat, which could not then be procured in any other way. Besides, my dogs had to be thought of; for when domesticated, they cannot be allowed to provide themselves wholly with food, or else they would become savage, emaciated and gaunt.

As I was unable to do any really hard work, I got as many cocoa-nuts and gourds as I could, and sitting under my leafy shelter beside the pool, I fashioned them into cups, dishes and platters. My convalescence proceeded slowly, which I regretted the more as I had resolved to return with Tiger to the salt-pan, and procure a goodly supply of that useful article, in order to preserve as much pork as possible, for my pigs were increasing in number, size and weight.

While sitting at work, or smoking my pipe, I thought more and more of the possibility of capturing some animal which would enable me to explore the country more extensively, and which would draw some rude kind of car, that would transport me and some part of my effects to different places.

My strength increased daily, and at the end of a fortnight I was quite restored. I should have started on another

tour now to collect salt, but that a very hot wind blew from north to south for three days. The air was deeply charged with electricity, and everything wooden became dry and warped, and in some cases useless.

During this time I remained still, reclining nearly all day under the deep shadow of a *mimosa* outside my enclosure, where I might expect to feel the first effect of a cooling breeze. In this way I made a discovery which proved of the greatest importance. During my residence on the island I often wondered at not having met with an animal which is almost always found in tropical climates. All students of natural history will be aware what an agreeable a dish it makes with its unlaidd eggs.

I mean the land tortoise.

Several times I thought I had seen its trails near the fountains, but I could never catch one. On this day, however, I distinctly saw something move slowly along at no great distance, which I at once recognised. Despite the great heat and the warm dry wind, my curiosity overcame my languor, and I rose to my feet, looked around to find something to protect me from the heat, and saw what I had not observed before—a fan palm, close to me.

The fan palm is very tall and graceful, each branch having the appearance of a beautiful fan; and when gently waved by the wind, the effect produced is indescribably pleasing. This species of palm is very rare. It produces fruit about the size of an apple, of a deep-brown colour, with a kernel as hard as a stone, and not unlike vegetable ivory. The fruit has a bitter taste; but farther south, I found it palatable. On account of the great height and straightness of the trunk, the fruit was very difficult of access.

Hastily plucking several boughs, I held them over my head, which was thus protected from the extreme heat, and keeping in the background I followed my discovery through the grass and jungle. But what could make it travel on such a terribly hot day as this, was a question which I was at first unable to answer.

The tortoise now skirted the rocks where my cavern

was, but fortunately for me, it kept under trees nearly all the time, and though its pace was very slow on a day like this, there was no disposition on my part to complain. At length, it came to where the trees were less verdant and many of them dead. They were in a circle round a small pool-like spot.

The land tortoise had led me to a salt-pan.

The trails of these animals may always be seen about salt-pans, or fountains, and they will travel many, many miles in search of this health-giving production, in lieu of which they often devour wood ashes. They generally frequent places where they can find the efflorescence of nitrates that contain salt. And yet it is wonderful that where man exists this animal can exist also, for it is no sooner seen than taken; the young for the sake of their shells, which the natives of Africa especially make into boxes, that, when filled with sweet-smelling roots and herbs, are hung round the persons of women. When full grown it is made an article of food, while its shell is turned to various uses, such as to hold water or to serve as a dish.

Those who have ever seen this creature must be aware that it is neither its speed nor its cunning that has preserved it from extermination, though it has been often remarked that its colour, yellow and dark brown, is admirably adapted, by its similarity to the grass and brushwood, to render it invisible. It will, however, when man pursues it, make a faint and miserable attempt at flight, but its real defence against animals is its armour of thick long shell. In this way it often resists the fury of the hyena and jackal, and foils the wily efforts of its other enemies. They are, when not disturbed, very long-lived.

I afterwards found many of them, and watched their movements intently. I observed that when they were about to deposit their eggs, they scratched a hole, threw up earth round the shell, and almost buried themselves. They then covered up their eggs and went away. This was generally before the rainy season, after which the little ones crawled out in their perfectly soft shells, and

cropping the fresh herbage, shifted for themselves. Having caught the one which had so opportunely discovered the salt-pan, I carried it home, made an enclosure for it, and placed it within. By keeping it well supplied with leaves, grass, and certain plants which I remarked it was fond of, with a proper supply of salt and ashes, it became very tame, and soon knew me when I called it.

CHAPTER XXXV

TAKING A HYENA.

As soon as the hot weather was over, I killed and salted as many pigs as I thought necessary, did a little carpentering, improved my table and chairs, and took in such vegetables and grains as were ripe. All this was laborious, and made me long more and more for some animal I could use either as a beast of burden or for my plough—for such a thing I intended to make, however rude and imperfect.

As there was no chance of meeting with any such animal in my part of the island, I resolved to start upon a thorough exploration of the interior.

The destruction of so many pigs, and the quantity of fat, offal, and other parts which I disdained, had made my dogs rather dainty, especially as I caught many birds with nets which I had set in the trees and bushes. All this refuse I threw without my fort, a very necessary precaution in a hot country. But as sure as I threw anything out in the evening, every scrap had disappeared, bones and all, before the morning.

This convinced me that some animal had been attracted to my neighbourhood by the smell. Now, the dogs having been out hunting for themselves one evening, came home very tired, and betook themselves to the interior of the cave, while I sat in my verandah. The little ones were, as I thought, safe under their mother's guard. Had the puppies come into the world during my presence, two out of the four would have been sacrificed

but as it was, I had not the heart to kill them. On this night I remarked that the she-wolf was very restless.

Then I heard a sudden rush, a squall, and a fearful growl from Tiger and the mother, when both darted off in pursuit, but returned some hours after, utterly exhausted and chopfallen. It was only in the morning I found that the animal, whatever it was, had carried off one of the puppies, and as the intruder was so excessively daring, I now became personally interested, and determined to take summary proceedings to put an end to his rapacity.

My own suspicions fell upon the relatives of Tiger's mate. But whatever was the fact, my ingenuity was severely taxed to provide a remedy. Pits are usually made use of to destroy wolves, but that was too laborious, so I resolved to try a plan of which I had often heard.

Selecting a spot at some distance from my fort, I chose two young trees, which I divested of their branches. To these I lashed a gun firmly, in a horizontal position, with the muzzle pointing slightly upwards. A piece of wood, about six inches long, was then tied to the side of the gunstock in such a way as to be free to move backwards and forwards, and thus act as a kind of lever. A piece of my bamboo string connected the trigger with the lower end of the lever. A longer piece of cord was then attached to the upper extremity of the lever. This cord having been passed through the bands of the ramrod, which was itself removed, a lump of flesh was fastened to it hanging over the muzzle of the gun. Bushes and boughs were then piled around so as to conceal all but the meat.

I then retired, and when night came I fastened my dogs inside and laid myself down in the verandah, where I burned a light while I worked at different things. My fancy had gone so far as to desire the possession of a hammock, and this I had begun to manufacture out of grass and such strong fibres as I could procure.

I do not know at what hour it was, but it was certainly

late, when I heard the gun go off, followed by a shrill and piercing cry. Satisfied that something had been done, I retired to rest, determined not to visit the scene of action until morning. I did so at an early hour, accompanied by my dogs, and found that the trap had succeeded.

A magnificent hyena lay dead near the muzzle of the gun.

It was a very handsome animal, of the tiger wolf or spotted hyena breed. With much difficulty I kept the dogs off, as I wanted to preserve the skin, which was at once removed from the body, and, for further safety, deposited in my pool with a number of stones to keep it down. My dogs were so dainty, they would not touch the flesh, which became the prey of the carrion vulture.

I have already alluded to my traps and nets for catching birds. About this time I became possessed of a parrot and a bird of paradise, which, after some starvation and considerable coaxing, I contrived to tame, and even in time to render docile. At last they both became exceedingly fond of me.

As soon as my harvest was over, and feeling myself perfectly recovered, an exploring expedition was determined on. My animals were seen to, my birds fed, and provided for during my absence, the puppies fastened up, with meat and bones beside them, and then my dogs and I started. My summer-house was my final destination, but first I took my way along the shore.

A lovely day, a light and pleasant wind, a sun shaded from my sight by a few clouds, and away we went. Again I followed that part of the coast which had brought me to the rock whence I had seen the slave ship. But I sought for no more such discoveries, so, hurrying on for three days, I came to regions of surpassing beauty. Once or twice, in the distance, I fancied I saw giraffes, and animals resembling mules or horses. Several times I discovered ostriches, but never near enough to attempt their capture.

Beneath a large tree, on the third afternoon, I pitched my tent, and fastened the dogs there so that they might

guard my slender luggage, and guide me back to my temporary abiding-place by their barking.

Roaming about as usual in search of plants and bushes, I discovered a salt-lick, which, by the marks around it, I at once knew to be much frequented by large and dangerous animals, such as the rhinoceros, the elephant, and the giraffe. But what delighted me most was the undoubted presence of some animal of the horse species ; so I resolved to watch and discover what it was.

Beyond the salt-lick, and separated from it by a neck of land, was a pool where, doubtless, the same animals came to drink. At the northern extremity of it I dug a small hole, and covering it with branches, I crawled into it, my double-barrelled fowling-piece being loaded on one side with swan shot, on the other with several balls. I had a spare gun, too, which on this journey I had strapped on Tiger's back.

The larger animals generally roam at night, so that until darkness came on I was glad to rest beneath a tree, and give my mind to thoughts of the past and future. At nightfall I sought my pit. Once or twice I thought the desired game had come, but it proved to be only my old acquaintances the hyenas, which I drove away by the power of the human voice.

Then I fell asleep. When I awoke it was very dark, and that darkness was deepened by the foliage close at hand. I could not see the end of my gun. Presently, however, my eyes becoming used to the gloom, and the clouds breaking somewhat, I saw that I was not alone. Several giraffes and zebras were drinking from the pool ; while peering out of the water I could see the heavy shape of some animal which I did not recognise. I at once determined to shoot one of the giraffes.

I had just completed my preparations when a noise which I can compare to nothing but the passage of a train of artillery, broke the stillness of the night ; it evidently came from the direction of one of the numerous paths, or rather tracks, leading to the water, and I knew not what to think.

Raising myself cautiously from my recumbent position

in the pit, I fixed my eyes steadily on the part of the bank whence the strange sounds proceeded; but for some time I was unable to make out the cause, though I remarked that the animals I had previously seen had all fled. All at once, however, the strange mystery was explained by an immense bull elephant slowly approaching the pool, followed by seven or eight others.

Their towering forms indicated at a glance that they were all males.

It was a magnificent sight to behold so many of these vast creatures approaching with a free, unsuspecting and stately step. The elevated ground whence they emerged, together with the misty night air, gave them an appearance of greater bulk and height.

I crouched down as low as possible in the pit, and with a wildly beating heart and ready gun, I awaited the approach of the leading bull, which, utterly unconscious of peril, was making straight for my hiding-place. The position of his body, however, was not suitable for a shot, so I waited anxiously for an opportunity to fire at his shoulder, which, it is said, is preferable to any other part when shooting at night.

But, unfortunately for me, this opportunity was not afforded till the enormous bulk of his whole body towered just above my head. The consequence was that, while in the act of raising the muzzle of my gun out of the pit, my figure caught his eye, and before I could get the piece to my shoulder, he swung himself round, and with trunk elevated and ears spread, he desperately charged me. There was now no time to think of flight, much less of slaying the savage beast.

My life was in imminent jeopardy, so I threw myself on my back with some violence and fired upwards at random towards his chest, uttering at the same time the most piercing shouts and cries. The change of position was probably the means of saving my life; for at that very moment the trunk of the infuriated animal descended precisely on the spot where I had been previously lying, and swept away many bushes of a large size that formed the fore-part of my hiding-place. In

another moment his broad fore-feet passed directly over my face.

I now expected to be crushed to death ; but instead of renewing the charge, he swerved to the left and moved off with considerable rapidity. Fortunately I had received only a few bruises.

As soon as the elephant had left me I was on my legs, and snatching up the spare gun which lay close at hand, I aimed at him as he was retreating and pulled the trigger, but, to my great mortification, the piece missed fire.

During these events the rest of the elephants retreated into the bush ; but by the time I had recovered myself they reappeared on the opposite side of the pool, though so distant that I could not fire with any prospect of success.

I made up my mind, however, not to watch at that pool any more in the night-time, though when my spirits recovered their tone I was none the less resolved to capture one of the zebras.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CATCHING A ZEBRA.

MANY of my young readers are, no doubt, aware that the horse, mule, onager, ass and zebra are all of one family, and though only three of these are usually tamed for domestic purposes, yet both the onager and zebra have been brought under the command of man. The quagga, a species of zebra, is used by the natives of Africa for the purposes of draught.

The Hippotigrine group, or zebras, was not known to the ancients, except in a circus. It stands between the horse and the ass. The head is of intermediate length, the neck naturally fuller and more arched ; the mane vertical, forming a standing crest. There is more girth, muscle and compactness, than in the others ; the shoulder is more oblique, and the withers more elevated than in

asses; the hoofs higher, and, as in the horse, they are round and flat; in the ass, oval and hollow; and in the species of hippotigris, they are oval at the toe.

I was perfectly aware that nothing could be more difficult than to catch one of these animals, and having caught it, I knew that it would be very hard work to tame it. But it had been done before, and I saw no reason why it might not be done again. This I was most anxious to accomplish, as it would provide me with a valuable steed, on which I might venture to explore the surrounding country to a great distance, and ascertain whether it was indeed an island which I now inhabited. My doubt on this point arose principally from the presence of elephants, cameleopards and other large animals, which necessarily require an extensive tract of country to range over.

Now if I could conquer the stubborn spirit of one of these animals, with such a steed I might solve the doubt. But the affair was not an easy one. Traps at the salt lick, pitfalls and other strange devices, entered my head, but I would not entertain any plan which involved a visit to the salt lick and pool at night.

Then I determined to watch and see what were the habits of the zebra, and thus solve the difficulty. I again fastened my dogs in their leash, and taking my fowling-piece with me, I walked towards some high trees, by ascending which I could overlook the salt lick and pool.

Then, mounting into the topmost boughs, I directed my telescope in search of the animals, but for a long time I could not see any. At length, when I had been admiring the landscape for some time, I caught sight of a drove of pretty striped creatures, feeding in a natural clearing, which seemed to be covered with a deep green grass, of which they were probably fond.

Descending cautiously from the tree, and peering about in search of other savage animals, I made my way in the direction of the little prairie, taking care as I went to note such landmarks as might guide me in my return. Skirting the pool where my late adventure had befallen

me, I entered the leafy arches of the forest, and at length reached a spot where I could see the drove of beautiful creatures, which were indeed zebras.

After feasting my eyes for some time on their lovely forms, keeping all the time carefully concealed, I examined the prairie. It was surrounded by such a dense mass of undergrowth that I saw no way by which the zebras could leave it; for I knew they must go periodically both to the salt lick and the water. Keeping among the trees, and moving slowly round, I came suddenly upon a beaten path through the forest.

I now saw my way clear enough, as I thought, to the capture of one of them, but not being quite prepared, I determined to adjourn any action until the next day, particularly as it was getting dark. Anxious not to miss my camp, I followed the zebra trail, walking very slowly to avoid losing my way, when suddenly my startled senses were assailed by sounds of the most horrible and painful description, like the groanings of a human being on the point of drowning.

I stood still, my gun pointed, and listened. Still the groans, sighs and stifling sounds were heard, but fainter and fainter every moment. Advancing hurriedly, I came to the edge of the forest, and saw, on the slope towards the pool, a huge beast with something in its mouth, which now moaned in a low and almost extinct voice.

It was a lion carrying off a zebra. The dying groans of this animal always resemble the faint gasps and ejaculations of a drowning man, while even their neighing is of a melancholy nature. But it formed no part of my project to attempt to rescue the unfortunate beast. I had too much respect for the mighty monster which had captured it to attempt to interfere.

I had yet to learn how great is the dread of the lion for man. My knowledge of natural history, derived principally from that great French romancer, Buffon, led me to believe the king of the forest a noble and daring adversary, whereas there is none of the feline race more averse to an encounter with the human species. The fiercest pangs of hunger will not always rouse him

to such a state of boldness. The younger lions are generally pretty well provided with game; but then, they will not attack a cameleopard or buffalo, except in droves.

It is when the lion is very old and toothless that he prowls round villages, killing goats, women, and children. Hunters have always remarked that "man-eaters" are very old animals, who, on finding themselves weak and ill, first strive to live on mice, rats and even grass, before they venture, in the agonies of hunger, to prowl near the habitations of man. But not being aware of this at the time, I remained still, and allowed the animal to walk off with his prey.

No sooner was he out of sight, than hurrying across the neck of land which divided the pool from the salt lick, I hastened to rejoin my dogs, nor did I consider myself safe until I was ensconced beside a large fire. But nothing occurred to disturb us, and when the hungry animals roused me, the sun had been up some time. A few birds, trapped in the usual way, a couple of land tortoises, with some eggs, served for a hearty meal. Then, to the delight of Tiger and his companion, we started to the prairie of the zebras.

My attention was kept alive by the thoughts of the lion, but we saw nothing of him, and reached the desired spot without molestation. After fastening my dogs to a tree, my first duty was to tie a rope across the zebra trail, just about as high as the breast of the animals. Then I let Tiger and Pet loose. They had been tied up for two days, and, as I expected, made a furious dash into the prairie. The zebras rushed together, and then with one accord made a wild dash for their hard and beaten trail.

The cord stopped them, and turning they passed me like the wind. But the dogs, barking and yelling, kept up the chase; and here they come again, their heads up, their tails in the air, their eyes darting fire. It is a magnificent sight, but I have no eyes but for one—a lovely creature. Out into the air flies the noose of my lasso, which falls with unerring aim over the animal's

head. A sharp turn round a tree, and the zebra is sprawling on the plain.

I rushed to its side, and having made fast its legs, I at once loosened the rope. It was time. The poor creature's tongue was lolling out of its mouth, from the frightful jerk of the lasso. As I rose to my feet in triumph I found we were not alone: a little zebra foal was standing looking pitifully at its mother.

It was beautiful to see the elegant and almost helpless little creature looking with affectionate solicitude at its dam, while now and then its eyes were cast upon me, as if reproachfully. I never saw such tenderness in any eye, save that of the deer, though I was accustomed to see evidences of intense love in the animal creation.

Securing it, and driving away the dogs, which would have made short work of it, my delight knew no bounds. I was now quite certain of having gained my object. If I could not tame the old one, I could train the young; for when taken in time, firmness and kindness combined will subdue most animals.

The old one, as soon as it recovered its senses, bit furiously at me, so that I saw severe measures were necessary. My dog Tiger was excessively intelligent, so that I had not much difficulty in making him understand what to do. At a sudden signal from me, he bit the zebra by the ear, when that animal began to utter those horrid sounds I have already alluded to, which brought another beautiful one of the herd very near.

Doubtless, it was its mate, and knew its voice.

However, taking no notice of this, I muzzled the zebra, and took off the dog. Having fastened its legs together, so that it could just walk, I then loosened the lighter cords and allowed it to rise. It trembled all over, with rage I believe, and when I pulled the halter it would not move until I set the dogs on it, and prepared to lead the foal away.

When it did move, my pride was great. My plan was to take it to my summer-house on the borders of the lake, and there to tame the savage creature. As we proceeded I began by keeping it very short of food. When we

camped at night, I loosened its muzzle, after securely fastening it to a tree, and then allowed the poor little hungry foal to obtain its natural sustenance, of which it was evidently very much in need.

It was the evening of the third day when we reached the borders of the lake. Another whole day was then occupied in cutting down trees, and clearing a small space about a dozen feet square for a stable. This I did, however, tolerably easily, as I left the natural supports.

But we did not reach the lake without incident or adventure, while an event was now about to occur which, while it expelled every other thought from my mind, nearly drove me mad. About every six months I seemed to grow reconciled to my position, when something would occur to destroy all my serenity of mind, and cast me back in despair into the great slough of despond.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN OSTRICH HUNT.

OUR daily march was sufficiently amusing. The zebra was fearfully obstinate and slow. Every now and then it would make desperate efforts to escape.

My plan of keeping it all day without eating tamed it a little; and it was so glad to get food at night, that it would even accept it from my hand. But its hunger once satisfied, it was as sullen, turbulent, and savage as ever.

Still I would not give up my attempts to tame it, as I could not afford to wait while the foal was growing. My constant practice was to stand beside the zebra in the evenings while it was eating, stroke its neck, play with its ears, and in every way make friendly manifestations. As I did so, it seemed strange to me that an animal so very much like the common ass, only taller and with a more beautiful skin, should be so exceedingly fierce, while the other was the meekest of beasts of burden. But then the wild ass is as savage as any.

The zebra would glare at me, curl up its lip, snarl, and even try to bite, despite its muzzle. Several times I felt inclined to use a switch rather severely, but forbore, as it might make it more inveterate against me. I was sorely puzzled to know how to proceed, as not even the presence of its young would restrain it from flight if I let it loose. But it was useless to worry my head until I had it in safe custody, so, as I have already said, I hastened on my journey as fast as its fettered legs would allow.

It was the second morning, and our breakfast being scanty, I thought I would scour the neighbourhood in search of extra provisions, such as fruit, a nut or two, and perhaps a land tortoise. With this view I advanced towards a row of cotton trees that indicated the presence of a small stream, and wading through I prepared to scour the fertile grassy plain beyond.

At that instant, a roar, such as books had told me usually comes from the lion's throat, burst on my ear, and sent me crouching in the grass, while my dogs slunk behind.

Not hearing the cry repeated, I crept through the low jungle, keeping my dogs down until I advanced about a hundred feet, when up jumped a whole covey of ostriches, two old ones and a young one. I then recollected the singular fact that though the lion's voice seems to come deeper from the chest than that of the ostrich, it is impossible, at a moderate distance, to tell one from the other.

Away darted the dogs before I could stop them, sending the whole brood rushing over the plain, where in the distance I could see many more of the same birds. In ordinary instances, to pursue an ostrich on horseback is folly. Its step, when feeding, is from twenty to twenty-two inches; when walking, without feeding, it is twenty-six inches; but when startled or alarmed, it takes strides of twelve or fourteen feet long, and of these it would take thirty in ten seconds. In fact, their speed is calculated by naturalists at twenty-six miles an hour. The only means by which they are ever shot is that, knowing

they never swerve from a course once taken, the hunters intercept them.

But in this instance there was another thing in our favour. The ostrich, contrary to popular theory, is extremely fond of its young. Therefore when the callow brood, not larger in size than bantam cocks, took to their heels, the female led the way, while the cock hung behind to protect the rear. Their evident anxiety was to save their progeny, some sixteen in number, at any cost; while mine was to capture them, as I knew the prodigious value of such a commencement to my farm-yard.

With difficulty the dogs were diverted from the chicks, chiefly, however, by the cunning of the cock, which, after attacking them with his heels, led them away from the brood, thus giving time, as he thought, for the mother and young to escape. As he went, not using his speed but making circles around, he kicked out behind; but the dogs kept out of reach, fortunately for them, as a single blow from his gigantic foot is sufficient to prostrate and even to kill hyenas, panthers and wild dogs. Then he darted off in an opposite direction.

The young ones were not very easy to catch, but at length I succeeded in capturing the whole brood, which I tied two and two by the legs. When my task was completed, to my great regret I was obliged to shoot the mother, which attacked me. It was between seven and eight feet high, and I have no doubt weighed nearly three hundred weight.

My dogs having started one or two other birds, I was fortunate enough to find a nest of fresh eggs. But how was all this prey to be taken to the camp? I always had with me a ball of twine of my own manufacture. With this I tied the feet of the juvenile ostriches so close together that they could only waddle, and in this way my dogs and I drove them into the camp. I was proud of my capture, as I knew that they would thrive in my gazelle valley, and by judiciously clipping their wings, and severing a particular tendon in the leg, they would be unable to get away.

My experience of the breakfast which I had earned

did not decrease my pleasure. I opened the end of one of the eggs, put in salt and pepper, and shook the whole up. It was then placed on the hot ashes and baked. Nor was one too much for my breakfast, such is the appetite produced by the kind of life I led.

I had now the elements of a farm-yard in my possession, the hope of a beast of burden, if not of a steed, and many other increasing blessings. But a great deal had to be done before any of these things could be brought to perfection. In the meantime, a journey to my cave had become necessary, as I intended remaining at my summer-house for some time, and the puppies, ample as had been the supply of food, would be half starved by this time. Then there were my birds, which would grow wild and neglect me, if I were too long away.

All things considered, I determined to make a rapid journey to the cave, to perform which, I took with me one gun and a light load, followed by the dogs. I cut down a good supply of grass for the zebras, while the little ostriches were supplied as well as I could. Then away I started at a rapid pace, which I was able to keep up with ease, it being a moderately cool day.

I found that no visitors had been within my domain, but it was a sight to behold the delight of the puppies, whose food was exhausted. A lot of dead birds in my nets and on the bird-limed branches soon satisfied them, as they had plenty of water. The bird of paradise and the parrot were famished, and much tamer than they had ever been before.

As soon as I had put things to rights, I passed through the cave to the summit of the rocks, and there began the construction of a sledge. On this I placed tools, some gourds of brandy, salt food, and everything else wanted at my summer-house, not omitting ammunition, rakes and hoes, as it was my intention to take advantage of the fertility of the soil to make a tobacco plantation. In my solitary condition it was a necessity; the plant, which was wild, was coarse and hot. The leaves were three feet by two. It was that peculiar kind which the natives of the interior of Africa smoke—stalks and

leaves—in a hollow piece of wood. But no one able to obtain the finer leaf would use it.

The sledge was built as lightly as possible, consistent with strength, and when it was loaded Tiger allowed himself to be harnessed without difficulty, and Pet, when placed side by side with him, made little resistance.

The puppies followed yelping with delight, though I was compelled to keep them in order with my whip when they persecuted their mother too much. The parrot and the bird of paradise perched on the sledge, and as we halted frequently, they often found an opportunity to feed. It was curious to see how much more easily they found food here than on the more arid part of my island,

Nature in this rich and moist soil teemed with life; the greater quadrupeds I knew were not far off; the forest echoed with the notes of birds; while myriads of insects were supported by a luxurious vegetation. It was now I saw for the first time the beautiful sun-bird the elegant bee-eater, and the plantain-eater, as large as a crow, with wings of the most lovely crimson glossed with purple. I heard, too, with deep satisfaction, the cry of the guinea-fowl as we passed a morass, and at once I made up my mind to add it to my menagerie.

But just then I could not leave my caravan, for the dogs would soon have run over their traces. Indeed, I was obliged to assist them in all difficult places, and to take my turn at pulling. Every half-hour or so we halted, and then it was that the birds enjoyed themselves. There were many locusts and cicadas about. In sandy spots thinly covered with grass they appeared almost innumerable, while their chirping was deafening. They were of various sizes, kinds and colours.

The presence of locusts alarmed me. I knew that the fearful swarms and horrid clouds in which they move, mentioned in history as astonishing and frightening mankind at remote intervals, all took their flight from the continent near which I was. But I hoped for the best. Nor did I like much more the termites or ants; those of Africa being a numerous species, intent apparently on removing from the face of nature every animal or vege-

table substance no longer necessary or useful. Like the Destroying Angel, they walk steadily forward in the path ordained them, sparing neither magnitude nor beauty, neither the living nor the dead. One species, which seems at times to have no fixed habitation, ranges about in vast armies, and being furnished with very strong jaws, they can attack any animal that impedes their progress. There is no escape but flight or a retreat to water.

I had much difficulty in avoiding them, and for this purpose I was compelled to unload and carry everything over a stream. While so doing, the dog started a most beautiful spring-bok, of the blue antelope variety, which sprang to a height of about five feet, and at a bound cleared the stream, twelve feet wide. I was sorry to do so, but I could not help shooting it, food being a consideration, especially with my ravenous attendants.

Soon after a halt was declared, the beast flayed, and a good meal furnished to my dogs. I myself cut off the choicest parts, and enjoyed a broil immensely. As I sat smoking a pipe after supper, with all my servants about me, I felt very much like one of the ancient patriarchs. A fire burned, crackled and sparkled at my feet, my dogs slept with one eye open, the cockatoo and bird of paradise perched on a bush; while I, having made a kind of hut of my sledge and its contents beneath the shelter of a large outspreading tree, enjoyed the luxury of a smoke.

I cannot say that I was unhappy. Certainly the hope of escape from that solitary dwelling-place was often present to my mind; but my avocations were so many and so varied, my blessings so numerous, my companions so faithful and attached, that I had little time to give to that most dismal of all maladies, mental despondency.

During the whole period of my captivity, with rare exceptions, I enjoyed excellent health, and this I owed almost entirely to early rising and temperance. I stinted myself in nothing, and once in a way I enjoyed a feast, but, as a rule, moderation was my law. There can be no doubt, and my experience was great, that the air of early morn has a refreshing and soothing effect, which this

pure genial breath of heaven does not possess at any other time of the day.

I slept soon after dark, and awoke at the first approach of the morning light, as it broke over the hills and trembled on their tops. And then outburst the mingled chorus of shrikes, quails, orioles, and rollers; while on a bough close at hand was perched the long-shafted goat-sucker, one of the most curious birds I had ever seen. It was no bigger than a thrush, but from each wing projected a feather nearly twenty inches in length, with the shaft naked except at the tip.

But, leaping to my feet and casting off the languor that seemed to pervade me in the presence of nature's beauties, I proceeded to provide for my necessities. I had now a very good supply of lines and hooks, so baiting them with meat I cast them into the water.

I then made a fire, cut some steaks off the spring-bok, threw some corn to my birds, which, however, were busily engaged in scratching the ground and eating food. They had found some caterpillars of the beetles that live on decayed wood, which I knew to be delicious eating; the parrot was scratching out of the ground what turned out to be the females of a particular kind of cricket. It was full of eggs enclosed in a bag, so as to resemble the roe of a large fish; and though travellers have extolled these as delicious eating, I felt no inclination to dispute them with my birds.

My antelope venison, with several large eels, the produce of my fishing, satisfied me, together with a drink from the stream, to which I generally restricted myself on my voyages. This done, the word was "start." My animals were buckled to; I took a cord, which I passed over my shoulder, and pulled away, and one hour before sundown we reached the borders of the lake.

The old zebra was hungry, and tolerably tame, while the young ostriches were very noisy. Before sunset I had collected such food as suited them, which I gave them freely. When my means permitted, my usual treat to them once a day was a mixture in the proportion of one pint of oats, one pint of coarse rice, half-a-gallon of

chaff, and four pounds of cabbage; but I allowed them to provide for themselves during the remainder of the day.

That night I reposed on the shore, but early next morning, being eager to begin working at my summer-house, I prepared to undertake the journey across the lake. My raft was no longer to be seen, so I determined to construct one solely of reeds; the most original and easily-constructed of all means of water-conveyance, and of which I had experience even as a boy. Some buoyant palms grew out in the shallow part of the lake, from which I cut a lot of reeds and threw them in layers cross-wise, until the heap appeared to me sufficient.

The raft was made.

No binding of any kind is requisite, but fresh layers of reeds must occasionally be added, as from the constant pressure at the top, the reeds get soaked, and the air contained in them displaced by water. The greatest recommendation of this raft is its buoyancy and the ease with which it is constructed.

I made it unusually large, as I wished to take across as much as I could at once. My birds perched themselves upon the different articles of furniture, and besides the parrot and the bird of paradise I took a male and female ostrich, of which I determined to make pets, despite the many stories I had read of their ferocity and wickedness.

Poling my raft, and my dogs swimming round it in delight, I reached the island without any accident. I drew the raft as close as I could to the shore, and landed all my goods.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

TAMING A SHREW.

Mr island did not appear to have been visited during my absence, which encouraged me still further in the intention of establishing there my summer quarters.

The island was skirted by the celebrated cameldorn

tree, which is of such slow growth as to take many hundred years to arrive at maturity. Its grain is very close, and after being dried for years it will sink when thrown into the water. It is harder and more durable than oak, and excellent for building. But within were trees more suitable for my purpose, while vines, red eatable berries, and a gigantic fig-tree, promised both pleasure and utility.

I did not fix my habitation exactly in the place I had before selected, but patiently seeking out a spot where the trees would aid my plans, I commenced operations. In the first place the ground was cleared of decayed wood, bushes and stones. My first essay induced me to act with extreme caution, for on lifting a fallen trunk of a tree, which was quite rotten, there issued forth a whole swarm of scorpions, which gave me a start I did not easily forget. These animals lie dormant in the hottest weather, but when the air is damp they come forth. No sooner does the scorpion feel himself in contact with any part of the body of either man or beast, than he lifts his tail, and with his horny sting inflicts a wound which is very painful, though rarely fatal.

I was careful to use a rake for the future; then as soon as the ground was clear and level, I made a great fire, and when it was burnt to cinders, I spread them over the whole surface of my future summer-house. I then cut a number of poles, which I planted at intervals between the trees, to encourage the growth of creeping plants, while others were crossed overhead, and thickly thatched with palm-leaves and other branches.

Beneath this I swung my hammock, but not before I had made myself a ladder. At a little distance outside the house I erected the kitchen, which was simply a shed open on all sides, but roofed over. My utensils for boiling were not efficient, though by means of hot ashes I could make broth in the half of a large gourd; therefore, my diet was chiefly restricted to roast and broiled meat, with fish and such fruits and vegetables as I could venture to make use of.

Every day I crossed over the lake to my zebras and ostriches, which were growing very rapidly. I approached

the old zebra several times with the intention of vaulting on its back, but its savage manner prevented me, so I found it absolutely necessary to have a saddle, bridle and spurs, before I could subdue its untamed nature. On the other hand, the foal was very gentle, fed from my hand freely, and soon began to prefer grass and herbs to its mother's milk. Still as it was not quite old enough to be weaned, I determined to wait for that interesting period ere I made the final attempt.

This made me resolve to transfer my ostriches to the valley of the gazelles, as the trouble of feeding them here was too great. Besides, I was glad to visit those interesting animals, now over a dozen in number, and see if the valley still afforded them sufficient food. This proved to be the case, owing to my having burned down the large reed morass, which had dried up, and furnished excellent grass.

The most fortunate part of the whole affair was this. Close to the large tree which had been in the centre of the morass, was a fountain or spring, which before had filtered over the plain and been lost amid the reeds. But when the reeds were burned up, by a very slight and judicious turning up of a very small bank, the spring first made a pool, and then trickled away in a rivulet across the plain. An English park could not have been more delightful or more useful.

These lengthened journeys between my cave and the summer-house, made me all the more anxious to tame some animal which could endure the fatigue of carrying me. But the more I thought, and the more I worried myself, the less did any rational or practicable plan suggest itself to my mind. At length, a somewhat savage mode of proceeding came to my recollection, which, after considerable hesitation, I resolved to put in practice.

It required, however, all my powers of mental reasoning to bring myself to try an experiment, from which my soul, under any other circumstances, would have revolted. All the way back to my cavern, I turned it over, and at last came to the conclusion that what I was about to do was right.

As soon as I had placed the birds within the enclosure, and settled them comfortably in their new home, I started on my way back. I was anxious to get over the severe trial which I knew awaited me, so I hurried along, with a feeling almost of anger against myself, but of serious determination.

The zebras had been left in possession of so much food that the mother was more savage than ever, which made me determined to have no further mercy. As soon, therefore, as I was rested after my journey, I began my preparations. In the first place, the zebra was tied more securely than before, and its muzzle drawn so tight that it could not breathe, except through its nostrils. Then, by means of my lasso, I threw it to the ground.

From skins, cloth and fibre rope, I had manufactured a rude kind of saddle, which, despite its kicking and other forms of resistance, I managed to fasten round its body.

A stick of hard and well-seasoned wood, thin but very strong, was then prepared, through each end of which was bored a small hole. Then I took an iron ramrod, which I had ground to a point, and heating it to a white heat, I deliberately thrust it through the animal's nostrils, so that after a moment's struggle it became, as it were, stupefied and insensible to pain.

I hastened to thrust the wooden kind of bit through the hole in its nose, and then let it go. The animal, as soon as I let it free, rose humbled and cowed. Its eyes glared at me with abject terror, and when I vaulted on its back, it made not the least effort to throw me. I gave a slight touch to the wooden bit, and it reared. There was no difficulty now in guiding it. It was my servant. It went whatever way I liked as obediently as a well-trained horse.

I did not, however, carry my triumph too far, but satisfied myself with walking the poor animal round slowly, so as not to irritate it. Then I led it back to its stable, washed its mouth and nose, and gave it not only a feed of its own fresh meat, but of corn and barley, to which, after some general show of repugnance, it took kindly.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MY SUMMER-HOUSE.

DETERMINED to let the painful and disagreeable wound of the zebra heal before I put it on its mettle again, I once more ferried myself over to my island on the reed raft, though I began to feel dissatisfied with such a slow and unsatisfactory mode of progression, so apt is man the more he has to crave for more. Besides, the shores of the island were lined with numerous trees which were suitable for canoes like those made by the savages, and I determined to lose no time in constructing such a one as would suit the navigation of that small lake.

But what was my surprise on reaching the summer-house to find my parrot, bird of paradise and two little ostriches, crouched in a corner, while the puppies were barking away furiously at some animal which had evidently frightened the birds. With a bark and a howl, the dog and she-wolf darted away. The animal, whatever it was, had escaped up a tree, however, and before they could interfere it was out of sight.

This did not suit me, as I had no wish to have my bower haunted by animals inimical to my feathered pets. But what could I do with a beast which clambered so quickly into a tree, and which none of my guardians could follow?

The day following was tolerably cool, so that having now the advantage of tools and a ladder, I proceeded to make additions to my hut which were much wanted. About fifteen yards from the place where I had fixed my abode, I noticed a little hillock on which the grass grew very luxuriantly, and on which the dead leaves lay damp and thick.

My fancy being excited, I kneeled down and cautiously removed the leaves, then the soft and half mucky soil, until I came to a mixture of blue clay and gravel, through which I poked a stick. At first there came bubbling up a quantity of silt puddled with water, then a clayey coloured mixture, and lastly a tiny stream of sparkling

fluid, that was indeed pleasant and refreshing to the mouth.

I at once set to work to improve this discovery. In the first place I removed a sufficient depth of soil to take in a tortoise shell, over which I made a kind of cage of bent wicker to keep away animals; while at a little distance I scooped out a ruder trough for the use of my beasts, which always afterwards preferred it to the water of the lake, as it was cooler and more refreshing.

The discovery of a rich pure clay made me eager to try my hand at the potter's art; but I must confess that here I was at fault. I would have given a great deal to have made even the rudest attempt at an earthen pot.

Then I made a kind of hedge round my summer-house to enclose my birds, and render them less liable in my absence to attacks from small animals. Towards evening I was standing contemplating some piece of work which occupied my thoughts, and speculating how it might be improved, when another commotion among my pets attracted my attention. Casting my eye quickly in that direction, I could not at first comprehend the strange disturbance. The birds crowded together once more, but this time without any defence, as the dogs had run away, probably in search of game. I gazed around anxiously, and then saw on the bough of a tree a small but handsome furred animal approaching with slow and cautious step, its eyes all the time fixed on the ground, where cowered its prey.

I knew it at once to be a dangerous and greedy animal, which could not be too soon destroyed. I fired, and down it fell in the agonies of death.

It was the caracal, or wild cat. A very beautiful animal; but in its savage state as cruel and mischievous as it is pleasing and faithful when domesticated. But I was not at all anxious to tame one, being quite satisfied with the attendants I had already. Its fur, however, made me an excellent cap, while that of the hyena formed a splendid coat.

And thus apparelled I mounted my zebra four days afterwards. When she got into the open air she stood

stock still. The wound in her nose was nearly healed, and at first she did not seem to heed it. I had passed thongs through the holes, and held them firm. Then I cut the beast a severe lash over the ears, dug my knees into her ribs, and hauled the rude bridle. Had my father not taught me to ride like a centaur, I should have rued that day.

Away sped the zebra like an arrow from a bow, taking no more account of my weight than of a feather; away—over hills, through plains, underneath trees, until I was obliged to bow down to avoid the fate of Absalom. Then she darted to the right, to the left, over arid plains, into streams of water, while all this time, instead of restraining her, I let her go. Gradually and cautiously I gathered up the leather bridle in my left hand, clutched the mane with my right, pressed my knees firm, and, stooping, caught her ear in my mouth and bit it sharply.

Instantly the zebra stood stock still, utterly astonished. Then she uttered the old moaning cry which once before had startled me. I let the ear go, and then tried the effect of the bridle. The beast was at once as quiet as a lamb. From that moment the animal was completely under my control. I led her into the stable, gave her some fresh grass, washed her mouth and legs, and then left her conquered, subdued, mastered.

About midday I was glad to return to my summer-house, the economy of which was now tolerably complete. My hammock, lined with fresh Spanish moss and grass, which I renewed every morning, served me as a bed at night and a sofa during the day; close at hand was a shelf on which rested my pipe, my tobacco gourd and my flint and steel; within reach was a large calabash full of water; besides there was a bench and a rough table, such as I had seen in front of road-side inns; then above this were two perches for my birds.

At my feet were my dogs, looking anxiously in my face for a chance morsel, which I verily believe these animals like better than a hearty meal in the ordinary way; while, lord and monarch of all I surveyed, I was, on these occasions, peculiarly happy.

It must have been half-past twelve—I knew midday by the sun—or perhaps a quarter to one. My violent journey had fatigued me, but it had also given me an appetite, and I had thoroughly enjoyed a broil of a sort of wild turkey I had trapped, and some fish from the lake. I had, by way of a treat, made myself a glass of brandy and water; then, like any other lord of the creation, having loaded my pipe, I laid me down in my hammock to smoke, and as I smoked, lo, I had a dream! At least, such was my belief.

The pipe, acting on me with its usual narcotic power, had sent me off into a short doze, from which I seemed to awake by the simple act of letting it fall. I turned in my hammock, and gazed around. I was in my bower, for there were my dogs at my feet, while I could *hear* the call of my merry cockatoo, and *saw* the bird of paradise asking eagerly for her caress. Nature itself seemed in a doze; for not a blade of grass shook, not a branch moved, not a sound could be heard, when a light footstep fell upon my ear.

I sat up in my hammock, and then, persuaded still more that I dreamed, I passed my hands over my eyes, and looked again. It was gone. What?

The Indian girl—that vision of beauty which once before had so gratified me, only to make my loneliness more lonely, my sense of the loss of human society more keen—had flitted before my eyes in the waving bushes that surrounded the summer-house. It was the same face, the same features, the same expression, even the same dress. And yet if it were real, why had not my dogs barked?

But surely I could not be the victim of an hallucination, nor did it seem reasonable for a sane man to be sitting up in a hammock and asking himself, *is it a dream?*

Leaping from my hammock, and putting my feet quickly into my rude moccasins, I darted into the bush followed by my dogs, but not a trace of any one or anything could I see. I stooped to examine the ground, in the hope that there might be some sign of footsteps which I could follow.

But there was nothing to guide me, and strangely enough my dogs did not bark, nor follow in pursuit in the way they generally did when anything strange passed our way. They roamed about in their usual frisky manner, but not in any particular direction.

Could my eyes have deceived me? It is true, I had been asleep—I had dozed at all events; but then I had sat up, I had heard the step on the cracking wood, and I had seen that face, which, since I first gazed upon it, had never faded from my memory. But I would not give up the idea that somebody had been there, so I rushed towards the beach—fool that I was not to have done so before—and there, on the sandy soil which covered my landing-place, I saw the print of a naked foot—

A small, pretty, naked foot.

I thought I should have gone mad with vexation, annoyance and savage despair. Once before I had found a companion, secured a friend, as I thought, and had lost her. Again, I was certain of it, the same person had come within my reach, and I had allowed her to escape.

But how had she returned to the island, and why? This was a question that bothered my brain for some time, during which I was deciding on my course of action. It flashed through my mind, that the second apparition of the Indian girl had something to do with the fire on the distant island. My responding signal had been seen, and she, knowing of my presence, had come to spy out the nakedness of the land. And yet she was not unfriendly; but still, if not, why had she been so anxious to make her escape?

All this time I had been making my preparations. It was my fixed determination not to allow her to leave the island again, at least, without an interview. Now, if my dogs accompanied me, they might by their barking and playing, prevent any approach to her. Taking my best gun, loaded with heavy slugs and one ball, putting my pistols and knife in my belt, providing myself with brandy, some cakes and my telescope, I hastily repaired my raft, and motioning to the dogs to stay where they were, I put off.

Never had I entered with such enthusiasm on any adventure. Companions I had in plenty; all that I needed I now had at hand; but what was this in comparison with the hope of again enjoying the society of my own race, of gazing once more on the human face divine, which, except reflected in a pool, I had not seen for such a length of time?

I determined to be wary and cautious, and to reflect on all I had heard of the ingenuity of savage races, which are said to follow up the track of men and animals with such surprising sagacity and patience.

Still I determined to try. Impelling my raft to my usual landing-place, I soon reached the other side, and looking about eagerly, I at once distinguished on the water a small raft of the same material as my own, which had been cast adrift, and was floating in the current on the right side of my island towards the fall.

My emotions were beyond control. There could now be no reasonable doubt. But having determined to follow the trail on foot, I peered about, and immediately discovered the spot where my dear fugitive had landed. Again I saw the mark of two small naked feet, for quite four or five steps, when the fugitive had halted, seated herself, and put on—what! have my senses left me, that I fancy such things?—*a manufactured shoe*, the mark of which, with its high heel and elegant foot, is clear upon the sand.

This was too much for me, and I was about to rush blindly forward, when I bethought myself that in this way I should lose the trail. Determined to put a strong check upon my natural impulse, I cautiously examined the tracks, and soon found that my stable had been visited. There were footmarks all round it; and more than that, a number of fresh branches of trees loved by the zebra had been thrown in.

Everything seemed friendly and kind. Why, then, fly from me with such pertinacity? However, this could only be cleared up by capture, so I soon found myself following the track. It was easy enough to do, as the high-heeled boot left marks even on the grass.

But it was slow work. Every now and then the track diverged, or the ground was bare and hard, or I accidentally missed a sign. But still, if I did go back several times, I never lost it.

One thing I soon discovered. It was in the direction of the sea—in the direction of the distant island.

While my heart sank within me at the probability of again losing her, I was still more puzzled to find a motive for what appeared to me strange and inconsistent conduct. It was quite clear she had escaped from her former savage, inhuman and cannibal captors; but how or why had she returned to my island, and having returned why had she fled again so swiftly, so eagerly?

When I became firmly convinced that she was taking her way as quickly as possible towards the sea, I used far less caution in my proceedings. But still, it was necessary not to lose the trail, so I barked the trees I passed, that I might be sure to find the return track.

But soon no further caution was required. The arid rocks of the coast lay before me, and the ground was too hard to leave any trail. It was most likely that, after keeping so long in this direction, she had sought the water's edge, instead of entering the thicket to the right, or the gloomy forest to the left.

With considerable hope of yet overtaking her, I took for my guide a clump of bushes, shaded by a live oak, and made straight for the cliffs. They were soon gained. I looked wildly down upon the shore—nothing was to be seen. All this looked so like magic that I knew not what to think. There was one thing, however, to be said—she had many hours' start of me, for in following the trail so minutely, I had been six hours on my way, and it was now nearly the dusk of evening.

I put down my gun, and laying myself flat upon the edge of the cliff, I drew forth my telescope, with which I swept the whole range of vision—nothing, nothing, nothing!

Night was now rapidly falling, and in a few minutes it would be dark. My position was by no means an agreeable one; so far from home, so utterly disappointed,

so weary and desolate. To add to the gloominess of my solitude, as the day ceased I could hear the occasional *qua!* of the night heron, which made the succeeding hush more dreary, during which even the falling of leaves, and the rustling of insects upon the dry grass, were hailed as a relief to the oppressive silence.

CHAPTER XL.

A MIDNIGHT ENCOUNTER.

THEN suddenly I thought I heard the purr and breathing of some animal close behind me. I turned slowly round, but could not see anything. Next instant, as the moon burst forth in all its rich beauty, I became aware that only a few yards from me was a huge lion. Mechanically I felt for my gun. No sooner did my hand move than a low and fearful growl warned me to be cautious.

It was the largest lion I ever saw, and it impressed me at the moment with the feeling that it was a grand and imposing sight to gaze upon the king of the forest in his native wilds; especially when he assumes an attitude of surprise or defiance.

Suddenly I saw the animal turn slowly round, and following the direction of his eyes, I saw a troop of some kind of deer with short horns, passing over the plain below at no great distance. So intent was my gaze for a moment, that I forgot the lion, but suddenly there was a low stifled growl, and then the faint cry as of some dying animal. Then again all was silent. I strained my eyes in vain to catch sight of what was going on, but I could hear only the crunching of the victim's bones.

I held my breath in fearful suspense; at last, weary and exhausted, I allowed myself to doze off a little, imagining the beast would be satisfied with his prey. But I have no doubt my sleep was a half waking, for I never seemed to lose entire consciousness. This faculty is successfully cultivated by hunters, who have much

night watching, and to it they often owe the preservation of their lives.

Be this as it may, something seemed to tell me that I was in danger, and I moved uneasily in my sleep, gradually waking to consciousness. Then, as my senses returned, I *heard* close to my face, though the darkness was so great I could *see* nothing, the slow breathing of some large animal, followed by what appeared to me the good-humoured purring of a great cat. I knew it was a lion.

He could not have been more than two yards from me; indeed, he appeared to be actually stooping over me. For a moment my senses were stupefied. I gave myself up for dead. I knew not what to do. My first impulse was to rise and fly, but this would probably have proved fatal, so I determined to get possession of my gun, which was lying near me at full cock.

Slowly, and with a fearful sinking of the heart, I began to raise myself to a sitting posture. Naturally I endeavoured to attract the animal as little as possible, and made no perceptible noise. But its hearing was terribly keen, for, faint as was the sound, it was heard by the savage beast, which gave a growl that I could not well mistake.

It appeared to be about to spring, though for half a minute I could not see it. Then I made out a dark lump like a rock, and after commending my soul to God, I at once pulled the trigger. I shall never forget the double effect of the echoes of the report of my gun and the roars of the savage beast, which was now in the agonies of death. I decamped to a distance; nor did I sleep much that night.

When morning broke I found the animal to be a very large one and quite dead. At any other time I would have skinned it, but my thoughts were now otherwise occupied. Had she escaped by sea, or was she still concealed on the island? I determined to satisfy myself on this point at any cost, so I took to the right of my night encampment, and made towards the woods. When I descended from the rocks, I came upon a plain somewhat

like a meadow, though in some places it was swampy as a morass.

I stood still in perfect awe and trembling, for there, before my face were the steps of the flying girl turned clearly from the sea, and there beside and around were the great splay feet of other savages in hot pursuit. Either she was hiding from the fierce blacks whom I had seen on a former occasion, or she was once more their unfortunate prisoner. My rage and indignation were beyond all bounds, for, though I knew nothing of the girl, I felt convinced her intentions were kindly towards me.

But I was well armed: the savages had only bows and spears; and, mad as the idea was, I resolved to follow and rescue her. Then I thought of returning to my home and fetching the zebra, but if I did so they might get away from the island before I could overtake them. This determined me to risk everything and start at once.

The trail was now easy enough to follow, and I had not tracked it many hundred yards when it became evident that the girl was a prisoner. She had tripped, fallen and been instantly captured by the savages. I then remarked that they made straight for the forest, not turning towards the sea as I had expected. This made me hopeful that they were still on the island.

I saw that they entered the forest where the trees were very lofty and the undergrowth scanty and thin, so that, moving as they did in a straggling way, nothing was easier than to follow their track. The girl walked in the middle, guarded by at least a dozen, so that there could be no chance of escape.

About two miles farther there was a very beautiful spot, which, however, I had avoided as being too much frequented by wild beasts. It was an open glade, with a fountain or pool in the middle, at which the animals came to drink. Here the savages had slept, and here the cruel monsters had inflicted on that vision of beauty and love the most abominable torture. They had made a fire for themselves, while at some distance they had bound the Indian girl to a tree, as I could see by the

withes which they had cut with some sharp instrument on their departure.

I drank at the fountain, I ate some fruit and berries, and once more began my pursuit, but their footsteps suddenly became invisible.

I had reached a chain of small stony hills, on which nothing was visible but a wretched, stunted vegetation, that scarcely left a mark. I looked to the right, to the left, on all sides, but could not discover a sign. Then my reasoning faculties were brought to bear, and I judged it most likely that they would follow in the direction they had already been going, and in which I feared the great continent lay.

I accordingly looked to the summit of the hills, and looked down upon the opposite side. I was now somewhat weary and very much in want of food, my breakfast having been scanty, but I could make out nothing that would serve my purpose until I descended towards the level country, which was very beautiful. It was a mixture of wood and prairie; thickets, clumps and small woods being scattered over an extensive plain, which rose and fell in waves as high as the great billows of the ocean.

But the plain had other sources of interest. Taking out my telescope to scan its surface in search of the fugitives, I saw here and there the heads of huge elephants feeding, while in other parts were groups of graceful giraffes that cropped the lofty boughs of trees in peace and quietness.

Then I saw a disturbance amongst the animals, both elephants and giraffes; and, as I knew that the lion does not hunt in the day, it flashed across my mind that the savages were again hunting, and that the search for ivory and skins was the proximate cause of their presence on my island. But if their minds were given to the chase, the prisoner would in all probability be left under a small guard, and in this way might, perhaps, fall into the power of a gentler and kindlier taskmaster.

Taking a careful observation of the direction in which I believed the savages were hunting, I descended with all

due caution towards the plain. As was to be expected, when the ground became soft once more, the track of the savages became clear; though now, as if they expected to start game, they kept close together, in a kind of double Indian file.

At length I came in sight of the whole party, or at least a great many of them, but nowhere could I see the girl.

A great number of elephants were feeding on the plain, which was dotted here and there with clumps of bushes and very tall trees; from the latter the savages were tearing down rough, strong, climbing plants, or rather vines. Others below were twining these together into a sort of strong fence; but it was quite clear that this obstruction was not sufficient to stop the elephant, but it might very likely check him in his flight, and entangle him in its meshes till the hunters had time to kill him.

This done, a number of the savages—and to my horror they were altogether over a hundred—made a large circuit, and soon after, by the blowing of horns, and yells more maniacal than human, they drove many of the herd in the direction of the fence. I could see, by means of my telescope, the dusky bodies of the savages crawling at full length on the ground, just like snakes, and quite as swiftly.

Away sped several of the huge animals, and, rushing forward with headlong speed, they were soon brought up in the tangle of the wild vines. Then enraged, and even terrified, they began to tear everything with their trunks and feet. The tough vines gave way at every blow, but did not break, and the more they laboured the more they were held.

Then up came the hunters, some staying on the ground, others climbing trees, and by swift discharges of their arrows and spears, they soon despatched several victims, amid loud cries and yells. The hunters were all very cautious, approaching the elephants from behind, or climbing into the loftier branches.

As soon as the savage hunters were satisfied, they began, some to cut off the feet, particularly choosing the

hind feet, while others were engaged in getting out the ivory. As soon as this horrid scene of butchery was over they moved away, and all they could not carry they left as prey for the cowardly jackals, prowling hyenas, and devouring termite ants.

I followed them, and kept carefully in the back ground until I reached their halting-place. It was on a gentle slope beneath certain trees, where some rude huts had been erected by a small party of youths, but nowhere could I see the Indian girl. Probably she was within the huts.

Now began one of those scenes of gorging which appear to be the delight of the savage, whether he be the Esquimaux, devouring thirty pounds of blubber, the Nubian, eating a whole sheep, or the Red Indian, swallowing all that is set before him. The feet of the elephant being the choice part, were first prepared quite in an epicurean manner. Holes were dug in the earth and filled with blazing fires; as soon as the wood was quite charred, the feet were placed in their extempore ovens, and other fires made over them. In front of these long strips of elephant meat were warmed, nothing more, and were then eaten.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE FAN INDIANS.

I WAS hungry, sick and hopeless. What could I do against such a band, and yet it never occurred to my mind to depart. As if spell-bound I seemed chained to the spot. I hid myself, therefore, in the bushes at no great distance from the pool, whence the hunters took their water. I felt no fear. I would have faced them all for the remotest chance of saving that girl, but how to commence I knew not.

Gradually night fell, very clear and chilly for that part of the country. The savages had made huge fires, round which they were carousing. It seemed to me some liquor had been added to their other articles of luxury. Seeing

that they were so engaged as not to notice me, I crept nearer. They had made a huge fire now in the centre of the camp, and were busy digging up the ground for the baked feet.

They certainly smelled very delicious, and in my hungry state, it was a great wonder that I did not crawl in and try to take my share. Suddenly, however, my attention was attracted by something else. Gazing across the group, my eyes were presently able to penetrate the gloom, and I saw the Indian girl seated within a small hut, gazing mournfully at the scene. Her feet and arms were securely bound, so that she could not move from the half-reclining posture she had assumed.

My blood boiled with indignation, that one so beautiful and so different from these painted savages should be thus severely used, and I began to devise the wildest and most absurd plan for her escape. However, before I did anything rash, I saw the over-fed savages gradually lying down with their heads to the fire, to sleep off the stupefying effect of the feast. At the same time, the odour of elephant meat again assailing me, I felt how absolutely necessary was the refreshing influence of food to enable me to enter upon my arduous undertaking.

I crawled towards a spot where I saw a whole elephant's foot laid aside, probably in reserve for the morning's meal; and after assuring myself that the savages near it were fast asleep, I cut off some portions and devoured them greedily. It was, without exception, the toughest and most disagreeable meat I had ever tasted.

But it seemed to renew my energies, and I now determined to effect my great purpose. I had some rum with me, of which I drank rather freely, and then crawling away made a wide circuit in the direction of the hut occupied by the Indian girl. It was now a starlight night, the moon having not yet risen; but beneath the arches of the forest the light was very sombre, while every now and then noises disturbed me. It was the night life of the woods. The cracking of twigs and an eloquent grunt, told of some perambulating pig; then a whole herd of gazelles, heedless of my presence, swept

past chased by wolves; then came the call of the grey partridge to its mate—these birds always sleeping side by side on one particular branch of a tree, the first home calling incessantly until the other arrives; then might be distinguished the gambols of monkeys in the trees; and then I stood erect beside the hut, in view of the whole camp.

As a rule, these savages lie about their fires nearly all night, smoking and telling stories; but the unusual quantity of animal food had deadened their perceptions, so that they slept soundly. Then I peered into the hut. She was awake. Placing my finger on my lips I came in front of her, and raised my other hand warningly. She uttered a shrill but pleasant cry, and again I had vanished into the darkness. My precaution was wise, for several heads were lazily lifted off the ground, and half-a-dozen pair of eyes peered into the skirts of the camp. Then, as if satisfied that it was but the cry of some animal, they curled themselves up and again gave unmistakeable evidence of slumber.

This time I approached the hut gently, and whispered low a gentle hush. Then I drew my knife, and cut her bonds, after which, seeing that the ligatures had hurt her, I lifted her in my arms and carried her unresisting form to a tree, where I had left my gun. As soon as I had deposited her on the ground, my next duty was to chafe her wrists and ancles, during which operation she looked at me with a tender and grateful glance that went to my heart. As soon as she seemed able to move I made signs to her to rise and fly, which she did most willingly. Clutching my gun with calm determination I led the way in the direction of my own residence.

Of course we did not speak. Neither of us understood a word of the other's language; at least, I never thought of trying, but I held her hand in mine, and saw that she was pleased with my attention. Never did man feel more valiant or more timorous. My determination was great to fight the whole tribe, while a dread was on my soul, lest I should lose that which would make life at least endurable in that desolate place.

When I was cast away, female society was dear to me in the extreme, but I never thought that the absence of it would be felt so acutely by any one. The longing was irrepressible, and now that I had found such a companion, my life appeared to have become more valuable.

We moved for a considerable period at a rapid pace, until, to my great surprise, I found we must have turned the wrong way, as the distant boom of the surf could be distinctly heard. Then the sky, before so clear and bright, became suddenly overcast. It was evident that we were about to have a storm, if not a tornado. Looking quickly round, a clump of thick vines falling from a baobab tree, seemed to promise ample shelter, and beneath this we hastily crept.

It was a very dangerous thing to do, as it thundered and lightened violently soon after, and rained as it only can rain in the tropics. But I thought not of danger. My newly found companion was by my side, and, wholly occupied with her, the danger did not alarm me. Every now and then, as the lightning was more than usually vivid, I saw her bright little eyes fixed upon me with a curious expression—half wonder, half doubt. But, by signs and gentle caresses, I endeavoured to reassure her; and when the storm was over, which it was in less than an hour, she was sleeping soundly, with her head upon my shoulder, and my arm supporting her.

As soon as it was thoroughly light, she awoke and looked round timidly, while a rosy hue burst forth upon her cheek. She then hastily rose, and listened. After a moment, she lay down with her ear to the ground, and making signs to me, jumped up and fled. The savages were clearly on our track. We were now crossing a little prairie, about a mile long by half a mile wide, quite clear, and covered with luxuriant grass, the abode of snakes, no doubt. But no thought of the beasts or reptiles of the field moved us, as we made for the skirts of trees.

Passing through these, we soon saw that we were close to a somewhat remarkable river. It had no banks, but the mangroves grew down into the water, while for a

hundred feet on each side was a huge unhealthy swamp. But there was no time for hesitation. The girl made signs that the savages were quickly coming up, and it was not for me to dispute her experience. With an elasticity of step, which was marvellous for one so frail and young, she leaped on to some of the huge stumps of trees, and darted from root to root with a light and even bound, which I could scarcely imitate.

She was now the guide. Every two minutes she paused and listened ; then, if she noticed a dead leaf had been trodden upon, or that our feet had made a mark on the decayed wood, she stopped to efface it. Very soon we were close to the river, into the turbid and muddy water of which she leaped unhesitatingly. I followed, wading a little above my knees, and hurrying so rapidly that I scarcely understood her motive. It was to turn a bend in the river before the savages came up.

The whole shore, several mud islands and the waters, were alive with birds. Sometimes a flock of pelicans swam by, giving us a wide berth, while at others, a long string of flamingoes stretched along the muddy shore, looking like a line of fire in the morning sun. There were herons, too, and cranes and gulls. But this occupied us little, as I had eyes only for the graceful form of my Indian girl, while she was intent on her duties as leader. Down the stream we moved, turning back every moment to look over our shoulders, in fear of pursuit. For some time we saw nothing of the *Fans*, for such I afterwards found was the name of the tribe. Then the girl clutched me by the arm just as a shrill cry of triumph warned me that we were discovered.

Quick as thought she drew me beneath the roots of a mangrove up to our waists in slimy mud. Then she took a log that was floating on the water, but attached to the roots by some creeping plants, which, having severed, she thrust it out into the stream. For a moment I did not understand her meaning, but when I saw that her quick eye had noticed a branch dipping in the water, that drew up precisely the same mud and bubbles

that our steps did, I comprehended the keen wit of the Indian girl.

Ten minutes passed, during which we very cautiously drew ourselves back in the swamp, the abode of alligators and snakes, until we were in a dark and noisome recess, perfectly pestilential in its odours. But to me it was delightful in my enthusiasm at her ready wit.

We could now hear the guttural cries of the *cannibals* at no great distance. Then we saw a body of them pass. They had secured a huge log on which some twenty of them sat astride, using sticks for paddles. Four of them guided the clumsy construction, which, however, moved rapidly enough with the tide, while the rest, armed with spears, bows and war-hatchets, peered about in search of the fugitive, or rather fugitives, for no doubt the foot-marks had betrayed my presence.

Our hole, however, sheltered us; and I was about to step out and look after them, when the girl checked me. She knew the cunning of these ferocious savages better than I did. The raft was only a blind, for soon there appeared several savages peering about on both shores, sounding the roofed and arched roots of the mangroves with their lances, and examining every possible hiding-place with keen and savage scrutiny.

I made ready. My doubled-barelled gun was cocked, my pistols were in my belt out of reach of the water, and with these I felt a match for half-a-dozen. They all carried spears, huge shields of buffalo hide and tomahawks slung in their belts about the extent of their garb. They passed in dozens close to us, but the mangrove root on the side of the water appeared too low, probably, to be the entrance to a hiding place.

Then there was a great stillness in the air, and I thought all was over. Still I paused, and allowed some minutes to elapse ere venturing to sally forth. It was well that I did so, for the next moment I saw at some distance from the opening a very tall and grizzled-looking old warrior, who was slowly and carefully examining the faintest sign by which to trace us. Suddenly I saw an infernal grin on his face as he looked at our opening. I

knew that we were discovered, so, taking deliberate aim, I fired.

I felt my companion shudder intensely—in her fright she had clung to me—but when the smoke cleared away the Fan warrior was nowhere to be seen. Drawing my half-fainting companion into the open air, I retreated through the swamp until we stood once more on dry land. I could see some high rocks in the distance, and towards this I directed my way, after loading my gun in presence of the girl, who, however, to my utter amazement, appeared quite familiar with the process.

Then on we started in the direction of some huge boulders on an elevated plateau, a few of them thirty or forty feet high by one hundred long.

Above there were some steep rocks, from which depended the India-rubber vine; from this—and not from a tree—the caoutchouc of commerce is obtained in Africa. It is a vine of immense length, with singularly few leaves, and those only at the end. These leaves are broad, dark green and lance-shaped. The bark is rough and of a brownish hue, while a large vine is often five inches in diameter at the base.

I made towards this part of the rocks, and having reached their base, I made signs to Pablina—such was the girl's name—that I would ascend. She looked wistfully up, and shook her head. Recollecting my lasso, I showed it to her, and then hurriedly began to climb. The vines were so thickly intertwined, that it was no easy task.

Soon, however, I found myself at the summit. The rock was quite perpendicular, and I was concealed in a thicket of low prickly trees. To one of these I fastened my long lasso, and, lying flat on my face, I cast it down to where the girl stood. Then I heard a shriek which rung to the very welkin, followed by an angry and savage cry unlike anything I had ever heard before. I bent over just in time to behold Pablina caught in the arms of a huge being whose features I could not distinguish. Then, having secured its prize, it fled precipitately. The girl was in the clutches of the terrible

and ferocious beast whom some have dared to compare with man. She had been carried off by a gorilla. I descended from my eminence in utter horror of spirit, and just as I alighted on the ground below I saw some twenty of the Fan savages debouch upon the plain. They too had seen the capture and instantly gave chase. With a weary, almost a broken heart, I followed.

CHAPTER XLII.

CANOE TRAVELLING.

I HAD read in story books of monkeys stealing away girls and then returning them home unscathed, but I had no such belief in the amenity of this gorilla, which was, without exception, the most hideous and unsightly monster that had ever crossed my path. Its immense muscular power was something awful, for it ran off carrying the unfortunate girl with as much ease as I should have carried an infant.

The trail of the Fan Indians was easily followed, and presently some drops of blood indicated that by means of their bows and arrows they had wounded the animal. Then I heard a most singular noise. It began with a sharp bark like that of an angry dog, then glided into a deep bass growl, not at all unlike the roll of very distant thunder, followed by a great shout, as of rejoicing, which was again succeeded by complete silence. Again I hurried on.

I soon came to a bank where, underneath a tree, lay the gorilla, riddled with arrows and spears, which he was endeavouring to tear forth. But he was fast going. Death had set its seal upon him, and when I came close up to him, he could only gnash his teeth at me and make a faint moan of mingled ferocity and anguish.

Despite my own sorrow and affliction, I stood still a moment to gaze with affright mingled with admiration at this wonderful creature. He was quite six feet high, with an immense body, a vast chest, great muscular

arms, fiercely glowing, large, deep grey eyes, and a fiendish expression of countenance that reminded me of some terrible night-mare vision.

Weak and ill as he was he glared at me with intense ferocity; his eyes flashed and rolled, while his huge and powerful fangs were clenched in impotent rage. I believe no man in his sober senses, gazing at that fearful dream-like creature—at that hideous caricature of humanity—could have ventured to compare it to the noblest and greatest of God's works.

Its *four* paws, its fearful ugliness, its howl, were of the very lowest order of the brute creation. It may suit the purpose of men who wish to make out that we are mere animals with nothing but a superior instinct, to compare these "man-like apes" to human beings; but during my residence on the island every kind of African monkey had passed in review before me, and though I found them artful, cunning, cute and clever, they were very much inferior in so-called intellect to the dog, the horse, or the elephant.

Still, when I saw them running at a distance, I could understand that ignorant people in early ages may have been misled by the glance, and thus have originated those stories of pigmies and hairy men, of which my reading had given me so many instances. But the chimpanzee, the ourang-outang and others, all come up to this peculiar standard—though perhaps less so than the gorilla.

This is, without exception, the most ferocious animal in existence, and it cannot be taken alive except when very young, in which case it always dies. The males are very fond of the females, and always allow them to retreat before they themselves retire. Their bodies are completely covered with hair, and the young sleep in trees. They eat vast quantities of vegetables, are particularly fond of nuts, but do not touch flesh.

They dwell in the loneliest and darkest parts of the forest or jungle, preferring deep wooded valleys or rugged heights. They are careful to keep near water; but, from their dislike to flesh, they are compelled to wander over vast tracts of country in search of food. This is chiefly

composed of berries, pine-apple leaves and other vegetable matter. They are enormous eaters, and it often struck me that their great strength was a kind of apology for those who would have us all feed on vegetables. Nuts and the wild sugar-cane are its choicest food.

But enough of this beast. The one before me was fast sinking, and I was strongly inclined to put an end to its sufferings by one shot in its breast, when I recollected the danger of such a proceeding. Turning away from the horrible sight, I again looked about for the trail of the savages. In the kind of open clearing, where the huge ape had fallen a victim to his rapacity and greediness, the mark of their steps was obvious. After seeing to the priming of my gun with fearful care, I again hurried on my way, and though scarcely hoping for success, I was now more than ever determined to brave every danger rather than lose her.

The forest was, for a little way, dark and almost impenetrable, so that my movements were very slow, until suddenly the undergrowth disappeared, and once more the savages were in sight. They had halted in a small circular spot quite devoid of vegetation. The ground was bare and rocky, while all around were huge trees with waving and projecting branches, whence depended vast curling vines, which in many cases hung to the ground.

Tied to a small tree was the Indian girl. She was weeping. They had fastened her wrists behind her back and herself to the sapling, while they were seated round in a circle debating earnestly upon some question of vital interest. That it regarded the girl I could tell from her averted looks, and those glances which she cast every now and then towards heaven, as if appealing for mercy.

The debate was very hot. Some were for one thing, some for another, but all pointed towards the girl. Then I saw a shadow of nameless horror fall upon the countenance of the girl, who, having been long a prisoner with some of the tribe, had learned their hideous language. A terrible dread went to my heart. These wretches, who were all cannibals, and who delight in nothing so

much as in human flesh, were about to immolate their poor victim and eat her.

Once this awful idea had taken possession of me, my mind was made up. Most of the trees were covered with dense foliage, so that once having climbed up, I had no difficulty in creeping slowly from tree to tree, until I was not fifteen feet from the girl, and less than thirty from the savages. My two barrels were loaded.

Then the whole party rose, and joining hands in a circle, began to move slowly round; in a few minutes the speed was increased, until in less than twenty minutes they were whirling round like mad witches round a cauldron. After this they halted, gave a loud cry, and the majority seated themselves.

Then a very powerful man, a perfect giant, stood out. He appeared to me to be a chief, for he was attired in a feather head-dress of glowing colours; his body had been oiled that morning, his teeth were black and polished as ebony, while a huge knife hung at his side. This he slowly drew and flourished before the eyes of the girl.

Then he began speaking. I listened with intense interest, as the tone might tell me something. It was, however, a monotonous song, that sounded very much like O! O! O! repeated a hundred times. Then he pointed his left hand at the girl, looked on high and raised his right arm, in which was the fearful instrument of execution.

The girl hung almost dead from the tree.

The savage stepped back to make a kind of spring; his breast was full in view. Without caring for or reflecting upon the consequences, I fired both barrels.

The concussion would have knocked me off the bough, had not my back been to the trunk, and my feet firmly implanted on another branch.

With eager haste I looked down. The wretched cannibal, who had been appointed to the office of executioner, lay flat on his face, while not one of the others had moved. They were still seated in a circle as if changed to stone. They appeared momentarily in expectation of being punished in the same way. Then one

looked at the other eagerly, and began to examine their own persons. As soon as they became persuaded that only the intended murderer had perished, a conversation ensued.

During this time the girl had roused herself, and a quick motion of her head in my direction made me think she had some faint suspicion of the truth. But I kept still as death, except that I cautiously loaded my gun. Then, to my amazement, the Fan Indians rose to their feet in a slow, quiet, humble way, and with many an obeisance and bow approached the girl.

They halted several times, singing in a chanting and monotonous way some deprecatory song, and casting fearful glances at the motionless dead body, for this man had died without a struggle. Then one or two of the number advanced and loosened the young girl, who appeared to take this treatment as a matter of course.

These savages have a great belief in witches and sorcerers, a kind of medicine men. They have no mercy upon the former, and whenever an apparently healthy person dies they are sure to search out the evil-doers. The doctor, or sorcerer, is generally selected to nominate the guilty, and as soon as he has done so the whole tribe is rapt in an indescribable fury and horrid thirst for human blood. No sooner are the wretched women, generally young and pretty ones, pointed out, than they are dragged down to a river, placed in a canoe, hacked to pieces, and cast into the water.

But not so the sorcerer. He is looked up to, feared and respected. No doubt, despite the fact that in this case it was a woman, the marvellous display of power on the part of one so young and fair, had gone far to convince the ignorant and savage cannibals that they were in the power of a Great Medicine.

With an air of singular awe they led her into their midst, now quite free from all shackle. She stood, apparently half amused and half frightened, still quite anxious, I am sure, to escape their clutches. But this was out of the question, for they were evidently resolved to treat her now with as much deference and respect as they had previously done with cruelty.

For myself nothing had been gained, but, on the other hand, her dear life was safe, and that was worth everything else. After awhile, no one having dared to touch or raise the body, they seemed to take counsel of her, but she shook her head and turned away with disgust. Had the wretches proposed to eat him?

The savages, who were now quite humbled, bowed their assent, and when she made signs that they should return to the camp, they readily obeyed her. But they walked slowly and gravely, with measured step, allowing her precedence, which she accepted in a very pretty and taking way. As soon as it was safe I slid from the tree, and though the wear and tear of the last three days had nearly exhausted my physical energies, I again followed them.

They were evidently thoughtful. These twenty warriors had seen the effect and heard the report of my gun; but how were they to explain the matter to their fellows. Probably they were familiar enough with words that expressed such meanings as thunder, lightning and thunderbolts; but what credit could they expect to obtain from those to whom they asserted that such was the agency which had been miraculously employed to save her?

Besides, there were the deaths of two warriors to account for, and if any of the party had seen me, their suspicions would have been aroused, and my supernatural character would not have stood the least examination. Savages may be duped to a certain extent, but their natural cunning and intelligence come to their assistance. My appearance and costume must soon have opened their eyes.

When the savages, behind whom I kept at a safe and cautious distance, came within sight of their camp, up rose the whole of the party to meet them. They were struck dumb with mingled astonishment and rage when they saw the girl walking freely in the midst of the others, and some even poised their spears and felt for their arrows, to execute summary vengeance on the runaway. But the returning warriors gravely interfered, and began an explanation of what had happened.

Young and old, warriors and chiefs, had been crowding round the girl with terrible and menacing looks, when the narrative began. One of the warriors spoke energetically and loudly. Some of the listeners shook their heads with a smile, and I could see that two parties were forming, one in favour of the girl, the other against her, in which case the matter would finally be settled by an appeal to arms.

I again, in my impetuous way, had forced myself up as near to the camp as I dared, screening myself behind bushes. The Fan Indians had their backs turned to me. On the bough of a tree, above where she stood, sat an old vulture watching the scene. Evidently the savages had been feasting, and this unclean beast was waiting to clear up the offal and remains of their meal.

Keeping my eye steadily for a moment on the whole group, I fired and shot the bird, which fell at the feet of the young girl. The whole terrified and affrighted group at once fell upon their knees, and the triumph of the former prisoner was complete.

The savages, however, who were not blind to their own interests, were not inclined to part with one whose power was so great. Little did I imagine the use they would require her to put it to. After some hasty refreshment of meat and what I afterwards found to be palm wine, the whole body started in an easterly direction. It was clear that she made a faint resistance. But this they would not listen to, for though their awe still continued, it did not make them the less taskmasters or tyrants.

Again the greater number availed themselves of certain logs of wood, of a nature peculiarly fitted for canoe building, to make their way up the river. It was clear that this was done partly for the sake of the wood itself, and partly to avoid the jungle and forest on its banks. To keep them in sight I was compelled to use my utmost vigilance, especially among the mangrove swamps. Then the bank became higher and clearer, until it spread out into a kind of lake with very low marshy banks and no wood. As far as the eye could reach, the country was

composed of vast fields of reeds, while there was scarcely any current, and the water was turbid and unpleasant to the smell.

Here the savages halted so suddenly, that I had scarcely time to bob down into the water and conceal myself behind a log to escape detection.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE WATER TRAIL.

It was now night. The fire-fly began to sparkle in the gloom, the mosquito to buzz and bite, and the thousand and one mysterious noises of the shore and water to rise on all sides. There was a faint light, such as in the tropics is apt immediately to succeed day, during which the landscape assumes an aspect of most enchanting but somewhat cold beauty. The grey hard granite sky, the turbid water, the waving reeds, and here and there a stunted tree, made up a landscape of wild romantic beauty.

The negroes who were acquainted with this river, selected a narrow strip of land, not above a foot out of the water, for their camp, and proceeded to erect some sort of hut for the girl, whom I could see walking about in the gloom. She was doubtless looking for me, and hoping that I might yet save her from a degrading slavery, which would probably end in her being sent to a barracoon and transferred to the Western Plantations.

Now my wish was nothing more than to aid in her escape, but how that was to be brought about it was more difficult than ever to say. The Fans were fully aware that she would escape if she could, so they kept a strict watch over her. She appeared to me like some queens and kings of savage nations, who are petted up and kept in splendid palaces, but never allowed to come forth in the light of day, or to see the glorious sun.

Communicate with her I could not without showing myself to the savages. At least, such was my fear and

dread at the moment. In the spot where I had halted in my mad pursuit of the poor girl, I was up to my middle in thick muddy water, while a log that had floated and then became fixed, formed a breastwork.

This log was, indeed, a miserable place on which to pass a night. But there was no help for it. On every side but that on which the negroes had pitched their tents, I could see nothing but reeds and water—the abode, undoubtedly, of crocodiles.

During the great heats of the day, these hideous animals retire to the reeds, or lie sleeping under deep banks, where they are sheltered from the sun. It is only about daybreak and after nightfall that they sally forth in search of prey. Nothing can equal the stealth with which they move, scarcely raising the faintest ripple on the water. They swim something like a dog, the paws moving over and over; but they can lie like a log on the water, staring about with their dull, wicked little eyes.

Often have I trodden upon them by mistake for a piece of wood. They sleep anywhere during the heat; they lay their eggs on the sand, and, covering them over, they leave them. Where fish is large and abundant they increase wonderfully, and thus large carcasses, slimy and loathsome, may be seen on every side.

Crawling to the log, which in its highest part was not a foot out of the water, I lay upon it at full length, hiding my gun lest its glitter in the moonlight should betray me. In this position, as my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, I could see that the negroes were busy making some preparations. Then several men began wading into the water in my direction, with great harpoons in their hands, and I knew that they were going to harpoon the crocodiles, the flesh of which all these wild races much admire. My heart beat wildly. I was not more than thirty yards from the sandbank on which they were encamped, so that if they should make a move close to my log, I must be discovered.

I had two pistols and my gun, so I determined, if it came to a tussel, to make a dash for the bank, firing right

and left, and thus force the savages to fly while I gained possession of the Indian girl. They moved slowly, some with lances, others with harpoons. Then came a whizzing sound, and a prodigious crocodile began kicking and plunging to gain deep water.

But the negroes were too much for him, and after a few kicks it was drawn ashore, dead. A loud shout proclaimed their success, and soon after a bright blaze indicated that they were about to have a feast. Nowhere, on land or sea, had I ever witnessed a more picturesque grouping than that of these black savages in that watery plain.

Presently several of the savages started up. I was very nearly doing the same, for close to me I heard a snorting and splashing. My good genius, however, enabled me to lie still, for I knew that I was in the very midst of a herd of hippopotami. They were to windward of me, standing on the shallows, and looking like so many old weather-beaten logs, stranded on a sandbar. Very little more could be seen save their ugly noses. I lay with a cocked pistol clutched in my hand, for the savages were up, and evidently prepared for sport, though it was almost impossible for them ever to catch these animals, even in pitfalls.

It is a most clumsy, unwieldy animal, remarkable chiefly for its enormous head, and disproportionately short legs. To facilitate its walking among the reeds and mud, as well as for swimming, the hoof is divided into four short, apparently clumsy and unconnected toes. They have huge crooked tusks, with which to hook up the long river grasses. They go in droves in places where, though their bodies are submerged, their feet can touch the ground. Their food is entirely vegetable.

The negroes came down to the water's edge just as a sudden groan was uttered close to me, and turning round I saw a huge animal, looking doubly monstrous in the uncertain light. Some fifty negroes now advanced, brandishing their spears, and when they were close enough they threw them at the beast, which, except that they

annoyed him a little, he felt no more than I should the prick of a pin.

But he was irritated, and, suddenly putting out his great speed, he rushed at the negroes with furious rage. With loud and hideous yells the savages fled, for they knew the danger. Neither rocks, nor bushes, nor swamps, are any impediment to him ; so in this case he went direct at the island.

Then I saw Pablina stand alone, right in the brute's way, after every negro had disappeared, hiding in the water, or lying down, or skulking somewhere in front of the fire. My hand shook convulsively as I caught up my gun, leaped into the water, took aim at the ear of the huge beast, and fired. With a hoarse groan, or rather grunt, it stood still and then fell down dead.

I stooped low, but still in a position to see all. She had not moved. There she was, with clasped hands and upraised eyes, perfectly certain, of course, who had saved her. So completely had the negroes vanished, that my first impulse was to make a rush towards her. Luckily I restrained myself, for in another moment heads peered up on all sides, until, perceiving the hippopotamus motionless, they ventured to approach it.

Their astonishment and delight seemed to know no bounds, as probably they had never seen one killed before. No wonder the negroes should be anxious to capture them, as their flesh, though coarse-grained and not fat, does not taste unlike beef, and is to the hunter a most welcome and wholesome dish.

But the way in which the negroes danced, capered and yet frequently glanced round with awe and terror, was perfectly ludicrous. They did not know whether to give way to joy or sorrow ; while every now and then they would turn and worship the Indian girl in the most absurd manner, clasping their hands, kneeling and offering her tit-bits. But at length pleasure carried the day, and, setting to work, they skinned their rare prize and began to eat.

This is always a serious business with savages ; but no sooner had they satisfied their somewhat inordinate

appetite, than silence ceased, and by the laughter, singing and story-telling that ensued, it is probable they were not ill-supplied with palm wine.

Hungry and thirsty I lay on a log all the while, not daring to move, scarcely even venturing to breathe.

When the first streak of dawn was in the sky, and while the savages still slept, it was my resolve to gain a safer place of concealment, which I did at the risk of meeting an alligator in the tall reeds. Some of these Fans might by chance have heard of white men and fire-arms, and when broad day-light appeared would, perhaps, pluck up courage and search for me.

But about two hours after sunrise not a soul was to be seen, and I arrived on their late camping ground just in time to drive away the filthy vultures, and take a meal from some stray and inferior part of the beast which I had killed. This and a draught of muddy water served me for breakfast. Now a feeling of hopelessness and despair came over me. What could I do against such an overwhelming force, and yet, having succeeded once in emancipating her from their clutches, why not again?

Then the reflection occurred to my mind, that these savages, who certainly belonged not only to the continent, but to the interior, were about to return to their homes, and if I ventured to follow them, every suffering from hunger, thirst and slavery, might be my lot. I was turning my back on that little earthly paradise which I had created for myself, and how could I be certain that I should ever see it again?

Little do we know the value of anything until we have lost it. How miserable seemed my state when first I was cast away on that deserted spot, and yet how rapidly had I learned what any man, however lonely, may do for himself if so inclined. After upwards of two years, though longing still to see once more the country of my birth, the island had become a sort of home. I was reconciled to it—I was used to it. There were my horses, dogs, gazelles, ostriches and other animals—what a state they must be in!

But would it be right, would it be manly, would it be

proper, to desert that girl who had won for herself such a place in my affections? I could not do it, so I again started in pursuit.

It was a water-trail now, for the savages, some sticking to their logs, some wading, everywhere left their mark. I left the stream, but keeping it occasionally in sight I contrived to follow the trail, and before an hour had expired I saw the troop of negroes hurrying forward with the utmost speed. But what else did I see? A channel some five or six miles wide, separating my island, as now I knew it to be, from a vast mainland, on which I saw rising, in the far-off distance, certain lofty mountains that towered to the very skies.

But grand as was the sight, it could not occupy my attention a moment. At my feet, not half a mile distant, was a very large village or rather a town, while dispersed over the plain below were animals that looked like oxen, cows and horses.

On the opposite shore was an immense enclosure, protected by a fence of palisades. I knew it to be a great Portuguese barracoon, or slave pen. I thought the Fan village which lay at my feet, must of course be in league with the slavers. In this, however, I was mistaken, for I found that the barracoon had long since been deserted. A fever carried off a few old watchers who had been left in charge of it, and the savages had pillaged it and carried off the few cattle that remained.

I followed the savages at a distance, and saw the women and children come forth in droves to meet them. I crept from tree to tree, and from bush to bush, until I got where I could get a good view of all that passed. The village was composed of huts and tents mixed together, outside of which was a species of stockade.

I saw Pablina in their midst, receiving all the honour to which the wonderful story the savages were now relating could entitle her. She bore herself with an uneasy and half-amused dignity, which under other circumstances would have been comic, but which now went to my heart. Everything conspired to make me feel her loss greater and more painful.

Following a circle of palm trees that grew at no great distance from the stockade, I moved round towards the sea-shore, whence I could get a better view of the whole scene.

A number of the largest-sized canoes, with a huge raft, were drawn into the mouth of a creak which, canal-like, wound up to the front of the village, and then disappeared amid a mass of dark-green foliage. Everything was clearly ready for a start. These savages would in all probability not long delay their departure. They had store of ivory; they had some cattle; they had, more wonderful still, horses of a stunted European breed; and they had their fairy queen.

I sat still, planning, plotting and trying to invent some scheme, however wild and dangerous, by which to attain my object, until night came on, and the sound of music recalled me to myself. I crept round as close as I dared, and peering over the stockade, I saw girls dancing, while the men sat round in a half-circle. The music was that of a drum made of wood and goat-skins, while the dancing was indescribable. It was a mixture of wild energy and deliberate indecency.

As Pablina was nowhere to be seen, I leaned moodily against a tree, and scarcely noticing what was going on, I still mused and mused and thought, until a cessation of the dancing again aroused me. Then the men crowded round the camp fires, while the women stood apart conversing in low, hushed whispers.

They were talking about *her*. This I could make out by their pointing towards a large tent which, closed and apparently without any ordinary door, stood on the edge of the village.

Near it was a kind of pound, in which they had placed a mare and colt, that, as if they were in want of fresh food, were rubbing their noses against the palings and whinnying every now and then in a mournful manner. It was quite clear that these Indians did not understand the nature of the animals they had captured, and that they kept them far more for ornament than use. How I gazed at them, with what longing, with what deep

anxiety! what projects the sight of them raised in my mind!

She was in that tent. The mare was strong, the colt above two years old I thought. At all events it would carry her.

As soon as the savages were asleep, I intended to enter the village boldly, visit the tent, and lead her to where the horses stood; then, armed as I was, escape would be easy. My heart thrilled once more with joy at the very thought. But at this moment I was compelled to bury myself deeper in the bushes, for I saw two girls coming towards me, carrying gourds and calabashes.

My impulse of thankfulness was great, for I was perishing with thirst. They walked slowly, chatting and laughing until they came within ten yards of me. One went towards a little hollow, whence she soon returned with several gourds of water, but the other stood still under a palm tree. What could she be going to do? Had she obtained some inkling of my presence? That was possible, for their hearing is very keen. I was soon undeceived. With an instrument not unlike a gimlet she bored a hole in the palm tree, after which a tube was inserted, and the calabash fastened on. This she did in several places and went away, leaving the juice to run till morning.

I knew that I should now be supplied with palm wine. But knowing that the process was slow, water was my first requisite, so descending to the pool I drank freely, and again took up my post of observation. The savages were still laughing, talking and telling stories. The girls and women were, however, gradually moving off to their several huts and tents.

Then I rubbed my eyes, fancying that I was in a dream. The skins of the tent—that of a great chief—were raised, and the Indian girl came forth. Her step was cautious and slow for a few minutes; then she sank down upon the soft sward. What was she doing? Something with her hands, but what it was I could not make out. After some minutes she rose with a bundle of fresh green grass.

Then she moved slowly, casting stealthy glances every now and then towards the camp fire, around which the savages were collected, until at last she reached the enclosure. The mare whinnied loudly, and the girl threw the grass forward. The two animals began at once to eat eagerly, as if they needed such refreshment. Then she climbed over the palings, and stood in the enclosure herself. In her hand was a strip of something; it was—yes—it was a halter.

Alas! she was about to escape without me. This was not utterly disheartening, but still, alone, the chances were against her; whereas, aided by me, she might have made that chance a certainty. Still, I determined to join her. I was certain she would not be frightened if she saw me, so I prepared to start ahead of her in the direction which she must necessarily take.

Then imagine my dismay and surprise when I saw her remove two or three palings, and lead forth the mare coaxingly; with a bound she leaped upon its back and urged it at once to a trot. The savages were silent for a moment. Then, at a cry from one of them, they darted to their feet, yelling, shrieking and making such hideous noises as transfixed me to the spot.

She, however, neither swerved nor hesitated. With a thong and with the heel of her little boot, she urged the stout and active mare forward across the plain and towards the rocks. Several of the fastest runners of the tribe dashed off in pursuit, though with evident reluctance. They looked at her now with more awe than ever, having probably never seen the horse thus used before.

But I was overwhelmed. To show myself was impossible; so just as I lost sight of pursuers and pursued, I sank upon the ground in a sort of trance, for it was nearly daylight ere I roused myself and took precautions for my own safety. Snatching away three calabashes of the palm wine, I hurriedly retreated towards a thicket.

The only place of safety which presented itself was a half-dead tree, covered by masses of the India-rubber vine. Into this I ascended by the assistance of the

creeping plants, and climbed up to where its branches were thickest. It was a very large tree, with green boughs on one side, and rotting ones on the other. The vine, however, was thick and shady, so that there was little danger of my being seen.

CHAPTER XLIV.

SMOKED OUT.

AFTER taking a considerable draught of the palm wine, I began to collect my scattered thoughts, when various plans suggested themselves to me. Hope told to me the flattering promise that Pablina would go at once and with the least delay possible, to my summer-house, in which case I knew that the poor starved beasts would be attended to. There, in all probability, she would wait for my return, as she knew that I had followed her.

All my fatigues, all my dangers, all my sufferings, past, present and to come, at once seemed to vanish. It was very unlikely that the savages would again venture into those parts of the island where I had made my power manifest, so that if I could evade them here, all would be well.

I had my pistols, gun, telescope and all my other traps safe, but I had no food of any kind whatever. This was certainly a terrible reflection, but there was nourishment in the palm wine, of which, however, it was necessary to partake sparingly, as, in my present state, it would prove unusually heady.

The day was hot, and I soon began to feel its torrid influence. The immense palm trees all round kept off the breeze, and then, despite my efforts to repel it, the feeling of hunger prevailed over everything else. It is a horrid sensation. But close to my hand hung the bough of a certain palm on which grew some nuts, shaped like eggs. With the butt end of my pistol I broke off the husk of one or two, and then ate the inside. It was as bitter as gall, very disagreeable and hard; but it was a

momentary relief, and had any more been within reach I should gladly have eaten them.

I hoped to exist during that day somehow, then by crawling through the forest, to ascend the rocky hills and wait till morning, when it would be easy to follow the trail of the adventurous and noble Indian girl. Thinking, waiting, the weary hours seemed not to move, until again nature asserted her rights, and hunger came upon me. It began by a dimness of sight, followed by a faintness I could not control, so that I lay back against the trunk helpless and exhausted.

I have often since believed that I must have fainted, but I could never tell how long I remained insensible. At length I became conscious of many and varied sounds flitting in the air, none of which had I ever hoped to hear again, for I felt that I was dying of starvation.

An eager pull at the intoxicating palm wine revived me, just as I heard loud shrill cries from near the water pool, cries of women, soon re-echoed by men. They had, doubtless, only now discovered the abstraction of the palm wine calabashes.

I knew the energy of these negroes, and I was aware they had not the ability in tracking, which characterizes the North American Indians, yet I was certain they would make some search for the audacious intruder, who had deprived them of a luxury which they prized so much.

The cries continued, and then I could hear the savages running through the woods, shrieking, yelling and uttering their jabbering war cry with perfect frenzy. With considerable alarm I heard them shooting arrows up into the trees, and uttering angry execrations all the time. It was evident that they suspected the monkeys of being the culprits, still, a chance shot might prove fatal to me, especially as their arrows are almost always poisoned.

A little while before, and the thought of death seemed to me to be quite natural. I had all but resigned myself to it, and believed that I should never descend from that tree again, until I dropped from it a corpse. But at the idea of a conflict with the savages, I roused myself, and looked to my weapons, determined to sell my life dearly.

I crouched, however, quite out of sight, and gazing straight down, I saw clearly that in this way they could not find me.

Presently I heard them come to the tree with fierce and horrid cries that resounded through the woods. Then, to my great astonishment, they joined hands and danced around, still howling and yelling fearfully. Had they discovered me? or what was the reason of their outcries?

When the whole village seemed to be congregating on the spot to join in the fun, the idea crossed my mind that my track had led them to the foot of the huge and half dead trunk round which they were laying siege.

I was treed like a coon.

What to do I did not know. My powder-horn was well supplied, my bullets were not exhausted, and there would be no difficulty in picking off half-a-dozen of them, if I were so inclined. But it would be wrong to kill them almost without a motive, nor would it be prudent in me to familiarise them with the discharge of firearms.

But what are they about? Several of the negroes, after carefully examining the tree, are collecting dry boughs and leaves, and piling them in and around the hollow trunk in great quantities, and so arranging them as to burn quickly and smoke as much as possible. The horrid conviction flashed across my mind that they were about to put me to "the ordeal by fire."

My limbs began to tremble, my teeth to chatter, as I reflected how, in a very little time, the powder which I had hitherto regarded as a friend, would soon prove my bitterest enemy. What was to be done? I glanced around at the neighbouring trees to see if I could reach them, but I could not find any branch strong enough to bear me.

Then I heard the crackle of the flames, and the smoke rose in a dense cloud. This lasted but an instant, when it became a steady and solid column. I sat shivering on my bough. There was no chance of safety unless I fired at the savages, and then descending the tree made my escape in the confusion without being seen.

The smoke is now stealing up through the hollow trunk, and escaping by numerous holes just where the branches fork. But what is escaping with it? Surely, I am not mistaken. They are wild bees, and the cannibal negroes are smoking them out in search of their most delicious luxury—honey.

This was a relief. They had not then discovered me. But what was to be done? In my faint and hungry state a meal of honey, washed down by palm wine, would be delightful, and I resolved to obtain it at any price. But how? Instantly a plan flashed through my mind, daring, audacious and dangerous, but which, in my half-lunatic state, appeared to me both ludicrous and feasible.

Observing that the hottest part of the fire was directly under me, I poured half of my gunpowder into a small shot-pouch, and then stuffed it into one of the palm calabashes, and corked it up tightly by means of a palm nut husk.

Taking careful aim, I poised it over the deepest and hottest part of the fire, and it dropped with a whirr and a rush into the flames. The savages started back in amazement, looked up at the tree, glanced at one another and began jabbering and pointing upwards. It was a very anxious moment. They doubtless believed that some animal was in the tree, perhaps a monkey, and a shower of arrows shot from such a number would be almost certain not to fail in their mark.

The conference lasted perhaps two minutes, when I saw one of the Indians poise his spear and then cautiously approach the fire. He was about to examine into the nature of the object that had fallen. Of course the palm wine calabash would be recognised! What then? The savage stirred the fire with the end of his lance, and seemed pondering on the round, bullet-shaped mass.

But his stirring agitated the flames, and for a moment concealed the thing from view. Then, as if to roll it out, he pushed it. It fell to pieces, and, with a loud and startling explosion, the fire was scattered right and left over the wonder-stricken and yelling band. Before the smoke had cleared away, so that I could look upon the

scene below, no sign of any savage, male or female, was to be seen.

There was no time to be lost; so, securing everything firmly to my person, I slid down, and, the bees having by this time taken their departure, I at once cut through the soft bark, and laid bare the most magnificent hive I ever saw. I devoured it greedily, all the while pouring as much as I could into one of the gourds, as part provision for my journey.

Then having filled the other with water, I turned my back on the Fan village and hastened towards the hills, keeping myself carefully concealed by means of bushes and trees. As soon as I was at the foot of the rocks I sought a sufficient shelter, and lying down I enjoyed something like a pleasant sleep.

As soon as night fell I awoke, and moving along slowly and deliberately I gained the narrow cavern or gully, which led upwards from that sea-girt spot into the interior of the island. I travelled a mile or two more by the faint light of a moon that was continually obscured by clouds, and again halted to wait for morning.

CHAPTER XLV

THE RETURN TRAIL.

DAY broke glorious and warm. I had, deluded by the darkness, left the proper path, and taken too much to the left. My goal was now my lake home, my summer-house and my animals, to which I hoped to find added that one charming companion, in comparison with whom all the rest were dross. The place where I had halted was a delightful spot. There was, at no great distance, a small lake or pond, in which wild ducks were bathing and fishing, while I could see hawks and eagles watching them from aloft. Some graceful palm trees hung over the water, and what added a charm to the scene was a number of bright-feathered parrots and other beautiful birds, with squirrels of all shapes and sizes.

But I must confess, just then I regarded everything living with any but poetical feelings. *I was hungry!*

Though I longed to make the rocks ring with the echoes of my gun, and thus procure some food, yet I did not dare to shoot. I was still too near the Fan village, whose warriors might be close to me, on the track of the Indian girl. I descended, however, to the lake and bathed my feet, which not only refreshed me greatly, but was the means of my discovering some ducks' eggs, which I devoured greedily.

I then rose, and skirting the lake I turned in the direction in which I had followed the savages, and which I believed to be the direct road to my summer-house. To my surprise and delight I discovered, close to the lake, the tracks of the horse on which the girl had escaped.

I paused. What was now the right plan for me to pursue? Doubtless, however devious the course she took, her aim would be to return to my habitation; else why had she visited it at all?

It was more prudent then to follow her, and upon this course I determined. The track of the horse led me for some time across the prairie, and then through a thick wood, where I observed the rider had alighted and walked.

Then came an open space, half trees, half bushes, where she had again mounted, and pursued her way. It was easy enough to follow, but my strength was quite spent. The fatigue, the worry, the anxiety and trouble, the hours I had passed wading in water and then sleeping in my wet clothes, were telling upon me.

I was ill. A severe cough hacked and tore my chest, and I could scarcely make any way. But what do I now behold? A column of smoke rising from a wood at no great distance. The girl then had halted, made a fire and awaited my approach. Roused to new exertion, I rallied and started on my way. It was a grove of moderate-sized trees to which I was advancing, and in another minute I was close to the fire.

I stepped lightly and warily not to alarm her; but I might have saved myself the trouble. She had been there,

it is true, for there was the fire, there were the signs of the horse; and a number of feathers and bones showed that she had succeeded in trapping some kind of game. It was a disappointment, but I had become so used to them, that this did not move me. On the contrary, the remains of a very fat bird, ready roasted and placed near the embers, served to revive me.

But why was it left? She must have been under the impression that I was following in her wake, and had left this as a sign.

My heart beat with grateful emotions and pleasant sensations, so that after a meal of roast bird, honey and water, I arose with a feeling of refreshment such as I had not experienced for some days. A small stream close at hand enabled me to refill my calabash, and then I started on again, always following the horse's track.

That night I slept under the shelter of a palm tree. When I awoke, my limbs were stiff, my feet sore and bleeding. I had been walking without moccasins for a whole day over stones and amid briars and thorns.

As soon as my body felt refreshed, I rose, but was obliged to cut a thick stick to aid me in my walk. I was half inclined to throw away my gun, but forbore, as at any moment I might meet animals against which it would prove my only chance of escape.

About a quarter of a mile from my resting-place I came to the edge of a plain, at the end of which I could make out the hills which doubtless surrounded my beloved home, for which I now sighed with an ardour such as I had never felt before.

The sun was hot, the sky was blue, not a breath of air agitated the scanty grass that grew upon the stony plain. My feet were in a dreadful state, so that at every step I took, leaning on my staff, I groaned aloud. Luckily I had water, or I must then and there have died. Several times I sat down and looked around on the arid soil, gave one glance at the heavens above, and while listening to the "cri-cri" of the grasshopper, I envied their power of locomotion.

Oh, for a breath of good and wholesome wind! That

would have roused and revived me. But it came not, and fearful that if I gave way too much I should die, I hurried on as fast as my tottering limbs would carry me. Slow as was the progress I made, for hours will show *some* result, very soon the distant hills seemed to become more distinct, the trees more sharply defined, the verdure more sparkling and real.

Then I tottered. The heat seemed to scorch me, and with one wild, last despairing cry, I fell upon my face—to die.

It would be difficult to say how long my senses remained in this state of utter unconsciousness, but when my hearing returned night was fast approaching. A grateful shower had conduced to the saving of my life by cooling the atmosphere.

But though I could hear distinctly, I was unable to move my head. Then, wafted on the air, there came a singular noise, and I saw afar off, as I thought, something circling round. It was a wild beast. Now it halts, now it gazes about—and now——

It is! it is my own friend and companion—my dog! Again I sank fainting in a delirium of joy. When my senses once more returned, there were bending over me on that desolate plain, my dog, my wolf, the puppies and my zebra, smelling at my apparently dead body with an interest which it was hard to believe.

Hark!

What comes with clattering hoof and quick step? This must rouse me. I glanced upwards. It is the Indian girl, who reins in her stunted pony, and, gliding to the ground, raises my burning head upon her knees, and chafes my temples with some alcoholic mixture. Then noticing my parched tongue, she squeezed some upon it, and this enabled me to speak.

“God bless you!” I murmured, forgetting that she understood me not.

She made some indistinct reply, and then a tear—a tear of womanly sympathy and tenderness, fell upon my burning cheek.

I could but press my lips to her hand, for I had no

power to do else, and then once more my weakness overcame me, and I lay insensible.

This fainting fit over, she assisted me to mount the zebra, then walking beside me, she supported me with her left hand, while her right guided her own horse. I did not attempt to speak. It would have been useless, for though we were both human, our language was different, and we did not understand one another.

The caravan soon halted, and, being assisted to alight, my island home was before me. She had travelled thither in search of me, and finding from the state of my animals how long I had been absent, she had fed them and let them loose. But her kindness to them induced them not to stray, so that when she took the return trail to search for me, they all followed her, and thus were instrumental in finding me.

The horse and zebra were placed in their enclosure, and were welcomed by the younger animal with great delight. Then the old plan of a raft was resorted to, and in half an hour I was within the walls of my hut. My birds screamed with delight, and were rewarded with a plentiful supply of grain.

Now came a time of suffering which will not readily be forgotten. I was in a raging fever, but I never completely lost my consciousness. I was always athirst, and every minute wanted some attention. Never can my memory fade so far as to forget her kindness, her devotion. She nursed me as if I had been her own child. Not only were her ways winning in the extreme, but her handiness was wonderful. Nothing that could do me good was omitted.

She never seemed to take any rest, for no matter when I awoke, with feverish tongue and haggard eye, there she was ready with broth or lime juice, or something else, to refresh and cool me.

Then came the convalescence. It was long, but it was delightful. As soon as my strength permitted, I shifted from my bed on the floor to my hammock, beside which she would stand for hours. Her glance was tender, pitying and affectionate; but at last, when I began to

teach her words in English, she would smile, but very, very softly, I thought sadly. Ah, me! the meaning is quite clear now, but it was not then.

I taught her the name of everything within sight, and she was wonderfully quick to learn, quicker than I had ever seen anyone before; but then I was certainly a very patient and devoted master.

At the end of a month I found myself up to breakfast. All this time she had nursed me, fed my animals, fished, hunted and snared, and yet she never seemed to be away.

I made her sit down now and enjoy her meal, while I waited on her. We were seated side by side upon a rude bench, and I was so placed that I could see into her eyes, which danced with fun as she pronounced some new word that I had taught her. She was now able to say all such words as *water*, *meat*, *cook*, *come here*, and the like, with the names of all my animals, as well as many small sentences necessary to our constant intercourse.

But there was a language she could speak as well as myself, which I was now desirous of interpreting in my favour. This was the language of the eyes. Breakfast was over. She had rejected the last morsel I had offered her, and was ready to rise. I felt a kind of tremor over my whole frame. Never in any encounter with animals or savages had I experienced such a sensation of genuine timidity.

But it was useless to hesitate. Matters could not continue in this way. What I wanted was a companion who could converse with me, who could comprehend my feelings and sympathise with me. What I desired and coveted was a wife.

I took her hand, pressed it to my lips respectfully, but with sufficient ardour to denote my devotion and affection. She bent her eyes upon the ground and blushed.

I now drew nearer, and passing my arm round her slender waist, I whispered words which she of course did not understand, and yet they must have conveyed some meaning to her mind.

She raised her head and looked me full in the face. There was a heavenly smile upon it. She took both my hands in hers, bent low her forehead, and kissed my hands with deep respect. Then she rose, and by signs described the occasions on which I had saved her life. Her action was so dramatic that I could not fail to understand her. I smiled and held out my arms.

She then kneeled at my feet, placed my hands upon her head, intimating that she was my slave for ever.

I raised her up, pulled her to me, and, by every sign I could think of, I signified my wish that she should consider herself my equal, my companion, my wife.

I would fain have kissed her lips and clasped her to my heart; but a tear trickled from beneath her eyelid, she shook her head, and spoke in low hurried accents some words which I myself had taught her—sweet, beautiful child of nature!

“Come—show—cave!”

I smiled. It was charming to hear her broken English; but, rising to my feet, I showed her that my strength was not yet sufficiently restored to enable me to walk, so I went and lay down in my hammock, where I soon fell asleep. When I awoke I was alone. This, however, gave me no uneasiness, for she had many duties to perform.

CHAPTER XLVI.

PABLINA'S DEPARTURE.

SHE did not reappear; so, desirous of taking as much gentle exercise as possible, I went down to the landing to watch for her. Yes! there she was, crossing the lake from the direction of the zebras' stable, but not as I had done on a rude raft of reeds, but on one made with poles and bamboo, quite elegant in form.

I hastened to hand her ashore, but she was too quick for me. She had been feeding my animals and had also snared a kind of hare, which she hastened to skin, prepare

and cook. Then she sat down, and while the dinner was cooking she took her usual lesson.

After great trouble I got her to understand the meaning of the word "pretty." At first she fancied that it was a part of some animal, especially as I selected the tail of the bird of paradise as my first illustration. But when I also picked a beautiful flower, and taking her soft hand in mine, I pointed to her eyes, mouth and chin, she blushed and laughed outright.

Then wishing to reward my pupil, I kissed her eyes, chin and mouth several times; at last she jumped up and hurried away to see after the dinner.

"No! no!" were her words, "not good."

Now I had never, that I remembered, taught her this word; so I stared with surprise, at which she only laughed. The truth is, I felt very awkward and foolish. It was my fervent desire to explain to her the state of my affections, and my wish to detain her perpetually on my island by making her my wife. But how could this be done to one so modest, innocent and simple, until I knew her language, or she understood mine?

Then I made a stern resolve to study together without thought of anything else, until I could say to her, in words that she could understand, "I love you."

That evening, after smoking my first pipe, I retired early to my hammock. I felt much better, and knew that a calm night's rest would enable me to carry out my promise to show her the whole of my territory. I had been easily able to speak of my cave, as she had seen that already. Her wonder at what I had done seemed great.

Pablina having set the dogs to their watch, and made the interior of the hut neat and clean, came and wished me "good night." I was half dozing as she stooped over my hammock, but I awoke and held up my lips. She raised her fingers and shook her head, but ended by kissing me.

I would have detained her, but two hot tears fell upon my cheeks, so I loosened her hands. She retired to the other side of the hut and sat down upon a mat of her

own making. Soon the hut was hushed in all the silence of night.

It was late when I awoke, but I was indeed very much refreshed, and felt better than I had been for a very long time. I was afoot early, and assisted her in those duties she had voluntarily undertaken for so long a time. She lingered a long time over the morning meal, was peculiarly affectionate to my birds, fed my dogs and patted them on the head in an unusually kind way.

She scarcely looked at me, and, what puzzled me more than anything, she seemed suddenly to have lost her appetite. This appeared strange in a child of nature like her. Then she bustled about and saw to the raft, which required some additions to make it bear us both. At length we started, and crossing over to the shore, we mounted our several nags—riding, of course, without saddle or bridle.

Our dogs followed, and in this way my cave was again reached. It was in much the same state as when I left it, except that some rats had eat up nearly all my grain. Lighting a lamp or two, I visited my cave with considerable satisfaction. It no longer appeared in the least lonely.

Hand in hand we roamed about, putting everything in order, while, as the wet season was approaching, I explained by signs that we must remove our habitation. A sudden look of sadness overspread her face. A struggle of some kind was evidently going on in her mind.

Now she would cling to me tenderly, when, in a moment of exulting fondness, I pressed her to my heart, and vowed to love her all my life. She would look at me with her deep blue eyes, as if her love were unfathomable; and then she would shrink from me with an air almost of loathing—but no, it was not that—but of fear.

That this beauteous child of nature loved me was certain. How then was her strange conduct to be explained?

We dined by the pool, beneath the shade of the glorious palms, and we then wandered towards the sea-shore. She had begun to prattle English like a child, scarcely

ever resting a moment without asking questions. She appeared deeply anxious to learn.

It was hot, and Pablina made signs that she would go into a thicket that skirted a small lagoon, and there bathe. I smiled, and indicated that I would do the same in a pool close at hand. But first I insisted on clasping her in my arms and taking a kiss. She returned it wildly, passionately, fondly, and then walked slowly in the direction which she had previously indicated.

I sat down on the shore, and gazed out upon the sea. A melancholy sensation crept over me—a sense of loneliness and sadness, quite unaccountable. But do not coming ills cast their shadows before, and hint to us that something terrible is about to happen?

I rose and advanced towards the shore to bathe. Out on the open sea, in her bark canoe, was Pablina. Her face was turned towards me. She knelt in the boat and clasped her hands as if in prayer. Tears were streaming from her eyes, while her glance was imploring and beseeching—as much as to say, “Forgive me, but go I must!”

I rushed into the water, but a stroke of the paddle sent the canoe out of my reach.

“Come back!” I screamed frantically.

She shook her head mournfully, sadly, but showed no sign of yielding.

Falling on my knees, I cried to her wildly, not to go.

“Must go!—no good stop,” she said, in a clear distinct voice, that came to me like the echo of a dream.

Then, as if afraid of her own self, she paddled away without ever looking back; and I stood alone once more on that desolate and naked shore—worse than alone, for she had taken my heart with her. In my passionate grief I cursed her—this noble, generous, true-hearted child of the sunny South, the angel of my chequered and terrible life!

But let any one place himself in my situation; let him picture Adam in his glorious Paradise alone, and he will forgive me—for happiness was born a twin.

There is no more terrible affliction than one of those unexpected losses which come upon us with the stun-

ning effect of a thunderbolt. It is dreadful to note the slow wasting away of the being we most love, until that dread hour comes, when the spirit departs and we are left solitary and alone on the bleak shore of life. But then we are prepared. Far different is the suffering of a mother, whose child is struck down by some fatal accident in the pride of his youth and beauty, from her who has had at least the consolation of devoting her self-denying and earnest love to smooth the awful passage from this world to the next.

While recovering from my illness, it never entered into my calculations to think of the time when I should be separated from this fair being who had been sent to me, as Eve unto Adam, for a consolation and a comfort. All my speculative arrangements for the future were based on the supposition that she was to be my companion.

How far my feelings had overcome me, may be judged from the fact that I could not even pray for consolation in my affliction. My soul was in arms against all and everything. I rose from my knees sullen, angry, full of evil thoughts and designs.

That her resolve was no momentary impulse was quite evident, for from the moment she started she never once turned back, but paddled steadily for that distant island which I could see rising like a cloud from the sea, and whence had ascended that column of smoke which had so much puzzled me.

Unable to bear the sight of the fast receding canoe—oh, had I but known of its existence!—I turned away towards my cave in silent and speechless agony, communing with myself as I went.

Why had she come a second time to seek me out, and to fill my imagination with hope and joy, if she had no special object? And why, having come evidently on purpose across that great expanse of water, had she returned, leaving me abandoned and alone? There must have been some motive for all this which no suppositions of mine could fathom, or she must have been guided by caprice, a failing with which, even in my anger, I scarcely felt inclined to charge her.

My cave once reached, I vented my anger on the faithful dogs and drove them from me with rage, unable to bear the sight of any living thing. Then I went to my brandy keg, and took a large quantity of the spirit, which, instead of consoling me, only added to my misery, by inflaming my already too excited imagination. However, it procured me sleep, which refreshed me much.

When I awoke with an aching brow, my first endeavour was to arrange and calm my thoughts. My poor father used to say that there is only one remedy for sorrow—only one means by which grief can be allayed, and that is, occupation both of the body and the mind; and I lived to know that my father was right.

Now during my wild-goose chase after the Indian girl, and during my illness, my domestic animals had been neglected. I had also forgotten to garner my harvest. Rousing myself to a conviction of the necessity for action, I rose and whistled to my dogs, which came bounding to me as if nothing had happened, and then I took my way towards the valley of the gazelles.

Everything there was in proper order. The gazelles, however, were very wild, while the ostriches stalked about with an air of ludicrous gravity most amusing to behold. Entering within the enclosure, which required some slight repairs, the cause of the wildness of the gazelles became at once evident to me. Some savage beast had been there. A large gazelle, the mother of the little herd, lay panting on the ground in the agonies of death.

I clutched my gun, and looked around. But nothing was to be seen. No doubt the beast, whatever it was, had been scared away by the barking of my dogs.

What was to be done? I could not allow my penn to be destroyed in this way. Besides, my mind was in such a mood, that action was above all things necessary, and no action could be of a more exciting nature than the destruction of the savage prowler which had dared to attack my flocks.

Looking around, a plan occurred to me, which I at once put into execution. Close to the fold into which I had driven the gazelles, there was a steep and rugged

ascent, leading to the summit of a cliff. But it was evident that on that side it could not be climbed. After dragging the dead gazelle close to the fold, I left the valley with my dogs.

The way I took was one by which I had never gone before. Generally my road lay through the valley, or to its right. Now I took to the left; and after considerable toil and difficulty, I ascended to the summit of the cliff. I was more and more surprised at the visible difference in the two extremities of my island. Here were blackened and bare lava rocks, steep volcanic ridges, gorges and irregular truncated cones, the work of old out-breaking fires; these, with abrupt jagged precipices, grizzly or grass grown, faced the sea, while not far from the shore were a few lank cocoa-nut trees, with crowns of scanty fan-like branches.

I hurried along, however, until I found myself in such a position as to command a view of the penn, in which my gazelles were huddled in a corner, evidently not yet recovered from their fright. Placing my dogs behind me, and motioning to the faithful animals to be quiet, I lay down on my face and watched.

Presently, a movement of terror from my gazelles warned me to be ready, and a hasty glance at once revealed the mystery.

About fifty yards from the penn a number of rocks, falling by accident in a fantastic and odd manner, had made a small cave, from which now issued with slow and stealthy step, a very large specimen of the hyena tribe. It glanced to the right and left, then behind, then forward, until it seemed convinced the coast was clear.

Then it came on, not boldly, not with a spring, but in the same sneaking and cautious way it had commenced its approaches. In two minutes, however, it was close to the still warm body of the gazelle. Just as the marauder thought himself sure of his prey, I fired. It was impossible to restrain my dogs after this, so leaping to my feet, I prepared to support them. Down the almost perpendicular rocks they bounded in pursuit. The hyena, instead of fleeing, as is the nature of the beast, had turned to fight.

But the contest was short. The bullet had gone right through him just by the joint of his hind leg, and when the dog and she-wolf flew at his neck, he fell helpless and overcome.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE ALBATROSS.

TAKING my way towards the sea, I soon found myself in a spot which was not familiar to me. Standing on the summit of a cliff, about twenty feet above the level of the raging sea, I had a good view of the shore for a considerable distance to my right and left.

There was at all events one object of attraction, and that was a number of albatrosses, variously occupied. Some were flying about; others engaged in fishing; others sitting on small solitary rocks alone, evidently hatching.

I watched these birds with interest, and bethought me of all I had read or heard of them. As my father had told me, their motion through space was most easy and graceful. In storms or calms, once raised upon their broad pinions, you never see them flutter, but, self-propelled, away they sail as naturally as we breathe. A motion of the head or the slight curl of a wing served to turn them. It was just like that motion through space which we sometimes conceive in dreams.

Men call the eagle the king of birds, but surely this is the queen—for queen-like and stately is her course upon the wing, and dignified, mild and unfearing her expression when captured (as she often is, with a hook baited with pork and blubber, and a piece of wood for a float.) But I never did, for a reason presently to be explained.

The eye of the albatross is full, bright and expressive, like that of the gazelle, and there is an expression of pathos and intelligence about it which is singularly attractive; the head and neck are large, but admirably proportioned; the feathers are either a pure white or

delicately pencilled and speckled, except on the upper side of the wings, which are mostly black. They sometimes weigh twenty pounds, and have twelve feet stretch of wing.

It sits on the water light and graceful as a swan, and will dive under, like a hawk or pelican, for something discovered by its keen eye beneath the surface. When it is about to rise on the wing, it has positively to tread the water for a long way, like a running ostrich, before it can get the proper momentum and soar aloft; but once it is fairly up, and its pinions quite free, it cleaves the air with exceeding swiftness, and skims the waves, like the smallest swallow, with perfect ease and grace.

It flies against as well as before the wind. It enjoys the calm, and sports in the sunbeams on the glassy wave; but its revel is the storm, when it darts its arrowy flight before the fury of the tempest, and seems to delight in breasting and mocking the surges of the mighty sea.

It feeds on small marine animals, mucilaginous zoophytes, the spawn of fish; but its chief delight is whale's blubber. When breeding, the female flies to some inaccessible rock or lonely spot of ground, lays seldom more than one egg, and builds a nest around that. All this time the male watches and tends her with great assiduity, bringing her the daintiest morsels from the deep.

From its often choosing the same places of breeding as the penguin, the albatross is thought to have a peculiar affection for that amphibious creature, and is supposed to take pleasure in its society. Their nests are continually to be seen together on rocks and small uninhabited islands. The albatross generally raises its nest on a hillock of heath, sticks and long grass, about two feet high, and round this the penguins, in a circle, make their lower settlements in burrowed holes in the ground, commonly eight penguins to one albatross. But to proceed with my narrative.

The sea came, I have said, to the very foot of the cliff on which I was now reclining.

After gazing for some time at the scene below, at the tossing waves, the grand horizon, and watching with in-

terest the movements of the birds, a feverish thirst came upon me. Now I was well aware that no water could be found nearer than the valley, and as I was not inclined to walk under the burning sun in search of drink, I thought I would quench my thirst with a few raw eggs.

To reach these much-coveted dainties it was necessary to make a long circuit, or to descend the steep cliff, and swim a few yards to where there was a slanting piece of ground, with many albatrosses and penguins. The cliff was steep, but there were many projections as well as holes to serve as steps, and my determination was no sooner come to than I carried it into effect.

Planting my feet firmly on a small ledge, I began crawling down the side of the rock. I was about half-way down, when suddenly I found that the face of the cliff was giving way under my weight, and before I could cling to the rock above, I glided down and fell into the boiling waves. In an instant I was carried out by the receding waves.

I knew that my strength was not equal to any long battling with the raging waters, so I at once hurriedly glanced round to measure the distance I had to go. The rock was already more than twenty feet off; but it was useless to make any efforts in that direction. My only chance of safety was to swim as rapidly as I could for the low beach to the right.

The waves hissed, boiled and roared in my ears with a fearful din, the current swept against my legs and impeded my advance, and then I felt a sinking faintness come over me. Besides, there was a despairing sensation as of coming, inevitable death. Behind me was a small rock which I might reach; but what then? It would be harder to swim ashore from that spot than from where I was.

Again my feet were brought into play; again my arms were exerted with what little strength remained, but in vain. No progress could I make. The sea ran stronger and stronger every minute, and there was nothing to be done but to yield to the boiling waves and die.

At this moment a cloud passed over my head, and a

huge albatross—evidently suspecting me of some improper intentions with regard to its mate, which was sitting on a nest close at hand—approached, and made a swoop at me to strike my head. I raised my hands mechanically, and in my desperate strait I seized the bird, which began struggling violently to get free. But I held fast, determined, like any other dying man, to catch at even a straw. Next minute my feet touched ground; the next I was rolling on the soft and sandy slope by the sea—saved by an albatross!

My astonishment, bewilderment and gratitude, may be conceived. In my struggles I had made for the slanting beach in a kind of sideway, so that at the moment of my clutching the huge bird, I was not more than a few feet out of my depth. However this may be, it was the albatross that saved me, and from that hour never did the thought of killing one enter my head.

My fatigue and exhaustion were such that I lay quite half an hour unable to move. My frame had received a great shock, and when I rose to my feet, it was with the firm conviction that I was about to be seized by another fit of illness. This reflection made me feel doubly the departure of Pablina—my nurse, my comfort, my consolation.

Then, as I strolled towards the interior of the island, the idea flashed across my mind, that she had only left me to communicate with her friends, and that she would shortly return in their company. This so affected me that I was compelled to sit down in order to recover myself.

At last the valley was regained, after a long detour to fetch my gun. Then calling off my dogs from their feast on the gazelle, I slowly returned to my solitary cavern.

It might have been from a sense of gratitude for my narrow escape from death—it might be something like reaction on my mind, after so much excitement and anxiety—but when I awoke in the morning, after a long and refreshing sleep, I felt more resigned to my lot, and in a better humour to contend with the ills and sorrows of life. Not that I abated one jot of my regrets—not

that I ceased to be sorry that I had lost her—but my nerves seemed braced, my energy revived, and my whole being, as it were, renovated and restored.

There was much to be done. My fields had to be garnered, ploughed and sown again, and then it was my earnest resolve to improve the state of my gazelle penn, so as to admit of its containing a greater number of animals, in expectation of the day when I should be without gunpowder.

Lions and such like beasts were not likely to visit this part of the island, which was without forests. But the prowling beasts to which I allude were here, there and everywhere.

My plan of ploughing up the field already indicated, was to fasten an iron spade, in a kind of slanting direction, to a good stout piece of wood; to which the horse and zebra were harnessed. Then seating myself on this, I urged the animals forward with the whip, until a very large space was turned up.

This was thickly sown with the seeds of several rich natural grasses. Then a large rake was dragged over the whole much in the same way, and nature and the climate were left to do the rest.

The properties of the cocoanut-palm have been already alluded to. Near my cave were several, which were profusely covered with ripe nuts, some trees producing more than two hundred. A number of these were collected and carted down to the valley. The stream, which ran through it, has been mentioned before. Along the banks of this a number of holes were made, and into these a fully ripe nut was dropped.

Those who only know the nut as an esculent would marvel at its growth. In a few days after being planted, a thin lance-like shoot forces itself through a minute hole in the shell, pierces the coarse outside husk, and soon unfolds three pale green shoots. Then, originating in the same soft white sponge which now completely fills the nut, a pair of fibrous roots, pushing away the stoppers that close two holes in an opposite direction, penetrate the shell, and strike vertically into the ground.

A day or two after this, so rapid is growth in this climate, the shell and husk, which, in the last and germinating stage of the nut, are so hard that a knife will scarcely make any impression, spontaneously burst by some inner force.

Then the hardy young plant thrives apace, and needing no culture, pruning, or attention of any kind, rapidly advances to maturity. In four or five years it bears; in twice as many more it lifts its head among the groves, where, waxing strong, it flourishes for nearly a century. Such are some of the wonders of the great vegetable world.

This somewhat laborious task executed, I started on a gallop to the summer-house on the island, and found my animals all prosperous.

The birds were so tame that notwithstanding my long absence they were not frightened at my approach. Having taken one long lingering survey of the place, and feeling a secret presentiment that I should never visit it again, I crossed the lake and returned towards the cave.

The wet season had set in, and my mind could now be given to the one idea, which had never been absent from my thoughts since the first moment of the escape of the Indian girl. With this view, I had laid in a large stock of cocoa-nut fibres, cocoa-nut wood, and other things, devoting one spare hour every day to the task. Besides, I had cut down several straight trees, a goodly pine among the others.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

HOW I MADE A BOAT.

I WAS about to make a canoe, with which to attempt a voyage of discovery to that island to which, it was my impression, the girl had fled.

But as the navigation was perilous and unknown to me, it was necessary to be provided against all contingencies. It was of importance to have food in abundance.

water and arms. Now an ordinary canoe like that in which Pablina had fled, was all very well for one who knew the land-marks and was able to go straight to a certain point, but it would not have been advisable for me to make the attempt in so frail a bark.

Mine was to be a kind of voyage of discovery, and therefore I required a vessel which would do service both in fair weather and in foul; the former of which had always been selected by Pablina for her journeys. My youthful studies had made me familiar with every style of water conveyance, from Noah's Ark to a Welsh coracle, including junks, prahus, canoes, duggouts, periguas, sampans, and the like. But there is a great difference between knowing the shape of a thing and being able to make it. Still it was my solemn resolve to try.

My first thoughts ran on a double canoe, which is composed of two single ones of the same size, placed parallel to each other, three or four feet apart, and secured in their places by four or five cross pieces of wood, curved just in the shape of a bit-stock. These are lashed to both the canoes, with the strongest sinnet made of cocoa-nut fibre. A flattened arch is in this way made by the bow-like cross pieces over the space between the canoes, upon which a board or a couple of stout poles, laid lengthwise, constitute an elevated platform for passengers and freight, while those who are to paddle and steer, sit on the body of the canoe at the sides.

A slender mast often rises from the middle of the platform, giving support to a very simple sail made from matting.

But there was an objection to this plan, which was this:—to make two canoes was to undergo double labour, and if I made a raft it would be unmanageable.

Still, no rational or feasible plan suggested itself. At last I decided to leave the choice to fortune, and in the meantime to prepare only such parts as could be easily constructed in my cave. There were indeed many things which would have been far more useful, but my mind was made up, and nothing could move me from my hobby.

As it was to be a sailing vessel, a mast, a rudder, a

yard and a pair of sweeps were absolute necessities, after which there came the important items of a sail and rigging. People talk of a labour of love. With me this was the right epithet to apply to the task which I had undertaken. I was goaded on by the sweetest of hopes, that of finding a companion to share my solitude and lighten my cares.

First, the pole which had been selected for a mast had to be rounded, smoothed and tapered off towards the top, to admit of its being placed upright without toppling over, as the vessel would be very slight. Still, the mast must have strength to support a sail.

This done, it had to be scraped with a piece of old iron hoop, that there might not be the slightest chance of a hitch in hauling up and lowering the sail. As my ingenuity did not enable me to construct a block, through which to pass the halyards, or rope that raises or lowers the sail, I was compelled to weave a kind of ring of rope, so well oiled and smoothed as to admit of the halyards being dragged through it. In order to give it as much of a round shape as possible, the inside was a stout piece of old rope, round which I wound some fine twine of my own making.

This took me four days of excessive labour. In the evening, while enjoying my pipe, my fingers were diligently engaged in weaving cordage from fibre, and during the winter season the quantity I made was very great. But it was poor stuff, for having no one to turn a handle for me, it was necessary to plait it rather than twist it. There is no doubt that with assistance I could have made as good rope as would have been required; for watching the rope-makers was one of my amusements when visiting the fishing town of Yarmouth in Norfolk, near which place, as has been already indicated, I was born.

The rudder was no easy matter. The shape was familiar to me, but how to fashion it was a mystery that I could not easily fathom. Besides, there were no iron rings and hooks to hang it by, so I determined at last to use a wide paddle, fastened in a rollock by means of some

good strong cord. Had my saw been a really serviceable tool, my progress would have been more rapid.

To make a wide paddle and two long sweeps, or oars—the former being the right name for all over a certain size, as those of a barge—it was necessary to take three trees, and to fashion them out with my axe, leaving one end wide, and the other such as could be clasped by the hand. When finished, no boat-builder in Europe would have allowed them a place in his yard.

But everything must have a beginning. The Chinese assert that the first idea of a boat was taken some two thousand years ago from a woman's slipper, and they do not seem to have improved much upon it. Still, others have, and boat-building is now quite a science.

When everything necessary for the boat was made, except the body itself, there remained preparations against hunger and thirst. Calabashes, gourds and a small keg were provided against the latter; while meat was smoked, biscuit packed, and vegetables put aside for food. When ready to depart, fruits and other necessities could be added.

At length, the rainy season ended, and the warm glad sun, the clear blue sky and the song of birds, invited me to sally forth. Having hastily visited my gazelles, and killed a pig or two, both for my own use and that of my animals, I made preparations for a journey into the interior. My horse and zebra I found fat and rather shy, but a little corn and salt soon got over that.

Then they were loaded; and, armed with gun and sword and all the tools I could carry, I sallied forth.

The spot which in my mind's eye had been selected for the purpose of trying my hand at boat-building, was three miles from the sea, but close to a stream that ran to the shore, and was navigable all the way. There I had observed some trees that were likely to suit my purpose. My recollection of the misfortunes of my great predecessor prevented me from making a similar mistake. On the other parts of the island there were trees much better suited to my purpose, but then they were far away from water.

The spot chosen by me was a small glade, close to a narrow bayou that ran into the river. Beside this there was just such a tree as I wanted, though not quite long enough; but it was wide and straight. After fixing my camp, my first task was to dig round the roots, at which I then began to cut with the energy of one whose life is at stake. This took me a whole day, and then the tree did not fall; but at early dawn my axe again woke up the echoes of the forest, and about mid-day it fell.

The trunk part was about fourteen feet long; and though my boat would have to be much larger, yet I did not despair. The trunk once on the ground, the whole of the superfluous branches and wood had to be hacked off with my axe. Then I felt the want of a good saw. But to cut short a very long and wearisome story, at the end of a week I had before me a solid trunk nearly fifteen feet long, by four feet wide and as many deep, on which to commence my arduous proceedings.

The labour was fearful, but I never flinched. My meals were hurried over as quickly as possible. There stood the log, and I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep in peace, until it was turned into a canoe. The hardest part of all proved to be flattening the upper side. This took me four consecutive days' hard work.

Then I began to make way. A good fire was lit at some distance, from which I every now and then took the live coals, and so placed them on the wood of my future canoe as to burn away the interior, while I fashioned the outside. In this way nearly all savage dugouts are made. But this was only in the rough, as my axe had again to come into play, to make the rude thing level. Then by the assistance of my horse and zebra the trunk was turned half over and supported by two thick branches, while I fashioned something of a keel.

This done, and my boat being water-tight, though the ends were somewhat slight, my resolution was to put it on a gridiron, in imitation of those used in dockyards. My way of making it was thus:—a number of poles and bamboos were cut and laid across the bayou or creek, just about four inches above the water, and on to this

the boat was dragged by my cattle, while I guided the progress of my precious treasure with a kind of rude handspike.

My object in placing it in this position was to lengthen it, both at the bow and at the stern. For this purpose, the thick bark of similar trees was cut off in one solid mass, and by judicious management made to assume the required shape. It was then fastened to the trunk by means of bamboo dowel-pins, or wooden nails. Across the bow was placed a small deck of bamboo, to consolidate the structure, other bamboos and bamboo cords being bent round outside.

Two powerful stretchers were placed above the hole in which the mast was to be slipped; these also were secured by strong bamboo dowel-pins. A seat in the stern sheet, and a small plank to place my feet on, and my boat was complete.

No! the master-piece of my cunning was yet to be developed. The presence of a large quantity of india-rubber vines had been one object of my selecting this spot. My gourds were now prepared, and the proper incision being made a good supply of the white milky juice was procured, with which, by the exercise of great patience, every seam, every join, every dowel-pin, was duly paid and caulked.

My triumph was complete. I had a boat.

But now came the launch. With a view to the proper and due observance of the ceremony, I placed on board my craft some large pieces of meat cut from a deer I had killed that morning, some corn and a gourd of brandy and water. Then a loaded gun was put in the stern-sheets, and I cleared for action. With my axe the centre supports were cut away, leaving only one at each end. Then the weight of the boat brought the keel to the water's edge, after which I cut the one at the stern, and the canoe was in the water on a level keel. Frantic with joy, I cast the food to my dogs, zebra and horse, drank a good draught of brandy and water, and leaped into the canoe.

I was afloat!

CHAPTER XLIX.

A FOREST ON FIRE.

A CHILD with its first toy, a young mother dandling her first child, and a lawyer with a long-expected brief, are usually quoted as instances of perfect happiness; but who so happy and proud as I?

Here on this desert island, with but a few old tools saved from the wreck of a ship, with but scanty knowledge of the way to proceed—thank Heaven, my youth had been spent in reading—I had succeeded in building by myself, without the remotest assistance, a canoe able to bear at least six or seven people, and I even fancied that with the cargo which one man could take with him, I might sail round the world in it.

In the early days of voyage and discovery, men had travelled wondrous distances in small, rickety and frail open boats, and had arrived in safety at their destination. Thus had the six hundred islands of the Pacific been peopled, that island world embosomed in a vast ocean, sweeping in latitude from pole to pole, rolling in longitude over a whole hemisphere, and exceeding in area all the continents and islands of the globe by ten millions of miles.

Many years before any record that we have, these islands rose from the deep, and were peopled by stray Malay and other boats being carried thousands of miles out of their course. Chinese junks, too, were known to land human freight there after being tossed a whole year on the angry billows; besides, I knew that Columbus himself had made his voyage to America in a caracal not much bigger than a barge. How proud I was then of this my vehicle for locomotion.

But now my boat had to be got down to the sea, which, without oars or rudder, was no easy matter. My animals, too, had to be taken back to the place whence they came, so that they might provide themselves with food during my absence, which might be for ever.

The precious canoe was then docked in the bayou;

after which, mounting my zebra and leading my horse, I started for home, followed by my animals. The journey was delightful, but was not completed in one day, as I wished to select the best place on the river for fitting out my vessel finally.

The mouth of the river was wide, with a shallow bar, over which at times the waves dashed furiously. These bars are formed by the action of the wind against the natural course of rivers, causing the sediment to be deposited at their entrances instead of being carried out into the deeper parts of the sea. When the wind blows strongly—and it generally blows in one direction—the water, struggling to ooze forth, causes a terrible wave, which is by sailors technically called a “bore.”

It was necessary for me to fit out my boat, provision it, and then select a calm day for my departure. But even with a stiff breeze, the sea here was scarcely ruffled. The spot was not one I should have selected as a residence, but it did very well for a port. Broad mudbanks extended on either side when the tide was low, while birds and reptiles covered its shores.

My camp was on a rising knoll, and here my poles were erected and a bush hut hastily constructed for the night. And then began the busy hum which is ever attendant on tropical nights; when insects and monkeys and other restless animals come forth in search of prey. But, guarded by my dogs, my gun near at hand and my fire blazing cheerily, I cared not. I slept soundly through the long watches of the night.

Up at dawn of day, with a stiff squall just ending. While getting my breakfast and loading my patient cattle, I noticed how the gust seemed to have cleared the atmosphere. The distant island seemed nearer, everything appeared to have fresh life, the very sea glittered in the sunlight with a brighter and a deeper blue, and the forest-clad slopes of this land looked more gorgeous, as they sparkled in the sun's rays, in all their varied panoply of gold and green. The whole scene was as of a “summer isle of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea.”

Away we all started to the cave, where necessarily two days were spent in final preparations. My provender consisted of one rum keg of water, six gourds and calabashes ditto, one gourd of rum and water, one ditto of brandy neat; a fair supply of tobacco and sundry pipes. Then came one keg of half salted pork raw, two joints of ditto roasted, much jerked or dried meat, some carrots, turnips, yams and cocoa-nuts, and a small quantity of corn. I took also two guns, a powder horn and some bullets. In addition to the clothing that I wore, a number of furs were taken down to the beach, where my store was established.

The mast, sail, oars and rudder were next transported with due care to the water's edge. A rough hut was erected over them, and then, with an ample supply of provender and bones, two dogs were tied up to guard them.

I killed two pigs, which I put in an out-of-the-way place for my dogs to find in case they were unsuccessful in hunting. A few additional scare-crows, in the shape of a stuffed monkey or two, were added to my plantation, and then, having acted like a prudent man, I thought it was time that I should give way to my feelings, and start on my voyage of discovery.

This time I took my solitary way towards the spot where lay my bark canoe. I had to bring the precious treasure down the river, and wanted no animals with me. Besides I wished to be alone, to dance, to jump, to expand my chest, to breathe freely as the thought filled my soul of what might be the ultimate result of my voyage. Mine was not a hope that told a flattering tale—it was a certainty. Methought I already saw her my companion in this new garden of Eden.

My way lay across streams, through dense forests and open glades. As I was on foot, it was evening before she camp was reached; and the thousand stars that strewed the sky peered knowingly down upon me through openings in the forest, and the tall trees waved their sable plumes over my head, and the firefly and other luminous insects lit up, first one tree and then another,

as if sparks of gold were being emitted from the rustling and trembling leaves.

But my boat was safe, and I lay down that night within it with rare satisfaction, wrapped in a huge rug made from two lions' skins sewed together. I had made no fire, and was surprised, when towards dawn I discovered how cold it could be at so short a distance from the equator. I found that the night dew had struck a chill to my very bones, so that when I crawled on shore, my limbs were quite stiff.

I made a roaring fire which soon relieved me, and I returned to my couch. But sleep not being so easily wooed as I could wish, I was soon on foot again, and having partaken of a hearty breakfast, I proceeded to cut down the pole that was to aid me in guiding my boat to the mouth of the river.

Then I entered my canoe, and with one thrust of the pole I sent it gliding swiftly and gracefully into the clear open water.

Above the dock where she had lain was an open lake-like space, where it took my fancy to give her a trial, for which purpose the pole was rigged up for a mast, and my lion-skin hooked on for a sail. A stout bough of a tree served for a temporary rudder or scull.

She behaved beautifully.

But before I give any account of the Stormy Petrel, as my canoe was christened, let me make one remark. I left a roaring fire on the beach, close to a large tree which was thickly overgrown by creeping plants and Spanish moss that hung down in graceful festoons to within a few feet of the fire.

The lion-skin was rather heavy and awkward as a sail, but this only proved the tautness and excellence of my canoe. As I turned her to the wind the boat tilted a little and lay down to leeward, but she kept her own, and to my infinite delight it was evident that, properly managed, she would beat to windward.

This was a most soothing discovery, for on this coast the wind appeared to blow periodically in one direction, except that it often shifted at evening and morning. So

transported was I with my discovery that, like a school-boy, I could not sufficiently glut myself with trials, until the sun, rising hot and sultry, warned me to start on my way. Still, such was my infatuation, that I continued disporting myself for some hours, until I was so fatigued that I was obliged to bathe to refresh myself. Then, however, the lengthening shadows warned me to make haste. The river below my dock was narrow and overhung with trees, while the jungle reeds grew right into the water, so that a night journey would be both dangerous and difficult.

This necessitated my pole being taken down, for it would be as much as I could do to navigate by means of my boat-hook, keeping the canoe in the middle, and especially avoiding the peril of snags and fallen trees, so often fatal to the traveller in undiscovered regions. I feared not for myself, but my anxiety was for my own darling boat—to me, worth all the other treasures I possessed.

Hark! what do I hear? The roar of artillery, the report of ten thousand muskets, or the fearful outbreak of a thunderstorm?

No,—it is the forest on fire!

Up high into the heavens rises the dark and pungent smoke, while the fierce element burning up the reeds and jungle, causes them to send forth an intermittent roar, which at times was deafening; at others, a series of loud and rapid cracklings, which I had mistaken for musketry.

It was a fearful scene, and what was I to do?

There was the choice of waiting until the terrible conflagration was over—until the furious element had expended itself on the dry trees, moss and reeds, when a way through the blackened mass could easily be made; or I could run the gauntlet and descend the river in spite of the flames, smoke and falling masses of fire. In my peculiar frame of mind it could not be difficult to decide on which course to pursue.

I would risk the trial by fire.

I was now about twenty yards from my dock, the aspect of which was so changed that I could scarcely

recognise it at all. The half-dead tree, from which the dry moss and creeping plants depended, had caught fire. The heat of the burning pile had been so great as to scorch the plants and trunk until they were as dry as tinder, when they flared up in a hot and massive column that seemed to reach the very sky.

For now more than six weeks had all this tropical vegetation been under the influence of a broiling sun, that penetrated to the very sap. Grass, leaves, trunks, were all equally affected, so that in a few minutes one broad sheet of flame enveloped the whole of the woods within sight.

But one side of the river was free, and I determined, despite the smoke which was blown *across* the stream, to attempt the passage, for if the fire were to be general, the journey would be perilous in the extreme. Fortunately, my canoe was very manageable. So great was the necessity for caution that I allowed the boat to go down with the current, only being careful to keep her off the other side by means of my invaluable pole. In this way I made some slight advance, when, lo ! another danger met me, on which I had not calculated.

Both sides of the river were now on fire.

This is how it happened. I have said that large trees, mangroves and others, grew close to the water's edge, the branches of which overlapped each other. But just facing me the narrow gap of the river was lined by cocoa-nut palms. The trunks had been entirely hidden by dependent vines when I saw them last. These had been caught by the swift march of the terrible element, and now the trees themselves were on fire.

It was grand. It was now night. The felt-like substance between the roots of the trees, as well as the leaves themselves caught fire, and communicating from one to the other, caused the scorching branches to make firework-like descents ; and the banks of the river on both sides presented rows of gigantic torches flaming and waving in the air. It was awful, for how to pass I knew not, as the fierce rapidity of the flames could scarcely be described. The fire leaped from tree to tree, from bush to

bush, licking up with its fiery tongue everything within reach—grasses, vines, leaves, and then the trees themselves.

I looked behind.

The huge, massive trees, baobabs and others, which interlaced their boughs, were now one sheet of flame, while the falling flakes had set fire to the reeds, that crackled, spurted and burned with the intensity of turpentine. It was one vast bonfire. The aspect of the heavens was infernal. Just above the line of flames, themselves bright and clear, there was a lurid yellow glitter, gradually fading to the faintest of light. Above this was a dense black canopy of smoke, which hung like a funeral pall over the whole island. The effect was truly oppressive, for, to gaze around, the last hours of the earth seemed to have been counted; and that the beautiful vegetation of the island was to be destroyed, scarcely admitted of a doubt.

But this was not an hour for action, but reflection. Escape from my post seemed impossible.

I was in a bend in the stream, where the width of the river was nearly double what it was both above and below. The shore was away some fifty feet on both sides, the trees, to which I was tolerably near, growing right in the water. It was easy for me to escape, as I could see that the forest was still unscathed at the back. But then, what was to become of my canoe?

This thought roused me. I grasped my pole, stood up and proceeded to guide my course. The noises were hideous. I could hear, amidst the roar of the flames, the hiss of the dying serpent; and I could see huge crocodiles, which at first had taken the fire for the beaming of an unusually hot day, gliding their slimy bodies through the water to escape.

Hundreds of fish floated on the surface, killed by the fearful stench that rose from the river as vast blazing masses fell into the channel. Eels of a huge and strange species came crawling half dead out of the reeds, while toads and other reptiles skipped about with unusual activity.

It was a regular scene for Pandemonium, through which

I passed with a beating and anxious heart. My lion-skin mantle was cast over my shoulders to ward off the falling flakes of fire, burning trees and wood, and thus I steered as rapidly as I could through the ordeal by fire.

The heat was intense, the smoke came wafted in clouds to my nostrils, bringing on violent fits of coughing. Still the awful conflagration seemed not to decrease. Just then my thoughts and fears were nearly brought to an end for ever by my canoe running against something that looked like a rock, which, however, as it was touched, seemed to rise out of the water and lift my canoe bodily from its own element.

I fell flat on my face with a rapidity which did my presence of mind great credit; next minute I was again afloat. Then peering over the side, it became clear, as I suspected, that the canoe had gone full tilt against one of a herd of hippopotami escaping from some favourite feeding ground, driven forth by the fire and smoke.

It was fortunate that the animal had been satisfied with just lifting himself out of the water, as, when enraged, it has been known to lift a boat full of men, and send them all sprawling into the river for caymans, sharks and alligators to prey upon them.

When the first effect of my startling rencontre was over, I discovered that the fire was behind me, and having had quite enough dangers for one day, the canoe was cautiously impelled up a little creek, where, should the fire not reach me, I resolved to pass the night.

My sleep was very sound, and when morning broke, to my amazement, the strength of the fire was broken. In some mysterious way it had gone out, and nothing could be seen but huge columns of black smoke that obscured the heavens, while high in the air soared the vulture, and high on the tree-branch croaked the turkey-buzzard.

I looked with regret at the desolation around; but one rainy season would restore all that rank growth of creepers, vines and jungle grass.

Yet what cared I, who was about to leave a spot which in beauty resembled a paradise, but was unendurable as a residence simply because I was alone.

CHAPTER L.

I START FROM MY ISLAND.

MY breakfast consisted of a piece of dry meat, a hard biscuit of my own baking, and a drink of water, after which, anxious to reach the port whence I was to start on my perilous journey, I once more sent the canoe gliding through the waters, the shores of which were no longer fiery furnaces, but banks of verdure, flowers and creeping plants.

My spirit was buoyant. The dangers I had passed through gave a zest and a charm to present safety, and the fine weather, the song of birds, the gambols of whole schools of monkeys, amused and even enlivened me. My gun was close to my hand, but I shot nothing, though much came in my way. There were snipes in abundance in the marshes, and the pelican was busy fishing, and once I fell over an old adjutant—the very king of fishing birds.

He stood about ten feet high, with a bill more than eighteen inches round, and about four feet long. He took no notice of me whatever; but strutting into the water, he stood like a statue, except that his head moved uneasily. Then down went his prodigious beak, and up came what looked like a moderate-sized conger eel; and with evident pride the bird stalked off to his breakfast rejoicing.

I could have laughed, had I not just then observed that my canoe was proceeding at an unusually rapid rate, with an inclination to turn round. I leaped up, and saw at once that I was in a rapid, while at the same moment the din of falling waters came clear and distinct to my ear. A cold perspiration burst over my body. That I was approaching a cataract was undoubted; that my boat was doomed appeared certain, while I myself might not escape with life.

For an instant the thought flashed across my mind of swimming to shore and abandoning my canoe to its fate. But my soul loathed the very thought.

And now it is too late !

I am sucked into the vortex, and must nobly brave the danger.

It was not exactly a cataract that was before me, but one of those terrible rapids where the river descends a slope at a fearful rate, and where snags, rocks and sunken reefs place the unfortunate traveller and his boat in such fearful peril.

I gave one last glance at the shore, I looked up at the richly-variegated foliage that clothed the banks, and I dipped my hands in the rippling waters to quench their heat. The dark shadows that fell across, the sunbeam that chequered the surface, all seemed to catch the eye and vanish. I knew that the moment was come.

I knew my peril. I was aware that as fierce and boiling waters were safely shot by trappers, boatmen and Indians, in the frailest of canoes ; but I also knew that there is no occasion in life when coolness and presence of mind are more required, than when steering a frail bark through a current that runs with inconceivable velocity. There is not the remotest chance of reaching the bank, and the canoe cannot possibly be turned—all you can do is to go at it, keep a cool head, a steady eye, a strong arm, and put your trust in Him who holds the waters in the hollow of his hands.

I sat, or rather knelt, in the middle of the boat—there should have been one in the bow and another in the stern—with my pole balanced like a rope-walker. On sped the little craft, away she rocked from this side to that, on dashed the white and curling waves, up went the bow and then the stern ; while I do believe that in this, my great hour of peril, the steadiness of my nerves, the firm position in which I sat, and the delicate use of my pole, saved me from utter destruction.

It was the work of an instant, when suddenly, with a fearful jerk my poor boat struck a rock, twirled, and began to fill with the white and boiling water.

With a beating heart I leaped out, and found myself up to my arm-pits in water, but protected from the fearful velocity of the stream by the very rock which had caused my shipwreck.

I looked around. I was at the bottom of the rapid, but not out of the tumultuous and turbid waters. With one hand I held my precious craft, with the other I sounded the river. I was on a rift, where, after a few yards, the depth was not over my knees. Wading and guarding my canoe with the care of a miser, it was soon safely moored in a calm receding channel, caused by the back water.

I have since then watched others heading the foaming torrent, making good their footing, and dashing headlong into the surging breakers that boil and hiss, and I have seen them do it with ease; but I must confess that once was enough for me, and I did not repeat the experiment.

My gratitude for my escape was, indeed, great. My poor canoe, which I had feared was ruined, was unhurt, so that it had already escaped the two most fearful of all ordeals—fire and water.

I crept on shore, made a fire on a grassy sward away from trees, and then taking off all my clothes, hung them to the blazing fire to dry. Then seating myself, I had while smoking my pipe an opportunity of examining into the nature of the feat which I had almost unwittingly performed.

The river for above a hundred yards was compressed by high rocks into a narrow channel, which descended by a rapid slope to the spot where I was seated. Every now and then a huge globular swelling betokened a sunken rock, while those which could be seen were terrible enough, in all conscience, to make me wonder how myself and my canoe had escaped so many dangers. An old proverb crossed my mind; but I will not quote it.

Below, the danger was not quite over, for, as is generally the case after rapids, there come shallows, which have to be steered through with extreme nicety. The river here was very broad, and on examination it proved in no place to be more than a foot and a half in depth. When, therefore, my clothes were dry and I had dressed myself, I was compelled for some time to wade through the water, and drag my canoe backwards, as the current swept it before me.

At length I was again afloat, and towards dark I reached my camp, after one of the most adventurous and perilous journeys in all my strange, eventful history. My animals welcomed me with delight, and with no small satisfaction I took a hot meal, and turned in under my tent or hut.

The next day and the next were wholly spent in preparations which so fatigued me, that on the second night I sank to rest utterly exhausted. My heart was full to bursting, as I gazed through the thick gloom at the spectral-like appearance of my little Stormy Petrel. I had but one idea, and that was my journey. My mind was as full of it as a boy's of his first visit to the theatre; but at last a doze relieved my weary brain from too much thought. It was not long I know, for by the dawn of day all nature was awake and so was I.

Determined to allow no evil influence to weigh down my spirits, I bustled about, fed my animals, put on board the last of my cargo, made my own dog Tiger enter the stern sheets, and driving the others back, leapt in myself, and then suddenly pushed off.

But my faithful beasts were not to be deceived in this way. The she-wolf and her progeny came rushing into the water, while even my cattle looked at me with wondering eyes. Still my heart was steeled against all these sentiments by that one affection more powerful than all others.

I drove back my followers with an oar, and saw them reluctantly turn towards that shore where, no doubt, it seemed to them lonely to be without a master. As for Tiger, there was a look half wise, half perplexed about him, which was infinitely amazing.

My whole attention, however, was now given to my canoe. The wind was light and chopping, now blowing gently, then suddenly ceasing, which seemed to indicate an inclination to a change in the weather. I was all the more anxious to reach the other island, over which hung a cloud of smoke, as there did also over mine. The water in the river as well as out at sea was perfectly smooth, but on the shallow bar there was what is called a little bubble.

It behoved me, then, to be particularly cautious, as my canoe had now to be put on its mettle.

There was some difference in descending rapids in a boat without any load or masts, and trusting to the same vessel rather deeply laden and with a mast and sail. As the wind and current were now the same, I was half inclined to lower my sail, but on second thoughts resolved to try it. The cargo was so well placed as to ballast the canoe perfectly, and next minute she was slipping through the waves with ease and rapidity.

Then the Stormy Petrel was on the waters of the sea, gliding with an easy motion off the land. The sensation was delightful. I did not venture just then to look back, being anxious to keep myself quite free from any latent regret or dangerous emotions. I had of course taken with me the compass, that greatest and most admirable discovery for the mariner. Directly the influence of the stream vanished and I found myself in blue water, it became evident that there was a current to the eastward, which made me shift my sail somewhat and steer to the south of west.

This change of the course brought my island in view to my right. But all I could distinguish was a mixture of rocky and woody shore. I was at least three miles from it, and with that wind I could not return to it had I so wished. To say that I was without dread of the consequences of my own action, would be to say that which was untrue. The dangers and the perils were known to me.

I might land on an arid, sterile and deserted island, without water or food; I might be detained there by contrary winds or storms, and in consequence might starve. Many men before me had been punished for discontent; but then, there was the sweet hope that I might find myself among my fellow-creatures; among those mild and beneficent savages to whose tribe Pablina belonged.

I did not insult her by calling her a savage. Heaven forbid! Indeed I often found myself wondering how she came into that part of the world; her skin, colour and

manners being so totally different from anything I had ever heard of the natives of that coast.

While giving way to delicious dreams, for the wind was so slight I had but to steer and smoke, it became evident that I was making scarcely any progress. The wind at last ceased altogether. This was very serious, as calms are sometimes of long duration.

As I had slept scarcely an hour the night before, I soon fell off into a heavy slumber, during which, horrid dreams of being for ever becalmed on a pathless ocean, of having only one tea-spoonful of water between myself and dog, of seeing that animal die, and then of being driven to eat him, rendered my sleep rather painful than otherwise. Then I awoke to find myself still becalmed.

The night was beautiful, but the stillness was intensely wearisome, and I began to think of using my oars, when I heard a low, rumbling sound in the distance. A dark cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, overspread the horizon, rose to the vault of Heaven and made that cheerful, pleasant night, hideous and black.

In a few minutes after, a dense mass of black clouds came overhead charged with electricity, from which there burst awful peals of thunder and flashes of lightning. Down went my sail to the very gunwale, as a white streak of foam was seen in the distance.

Then all was still. But on the edge of the horizon I saw a small, red and increasing light.

Then the squall burst. It was fortunate that my sail was down, for in one moment I was wildly tossing amid the spray, while my boat whirled round, and I was rocked so violently that I could hardly keep my seat. In five minutes more it was over. It was a mere puff and it was gone.

CHAPTER LI.

VOLCANOES AND WATER-SPOUTS.

THE small red light which I had before observed on the horizon, now grew rapidly; then up rose to the wild

weird heavens a column of fire, followed by an uproar, as if all creation were being enveloped in destruction. The noise was appalling—a mixture of artillery roars, with mutterings of agony and wrath, as of some immense power writhing under chains and darkness.

Up went flames from a large cone, with red-hot stones, cinders and ashes, which were propelled to a great height with immense violence, and then the molten lava came boiling over in two beautifully curved streams, glittering with indescribable brilliancy.

In the stillness of that night I fancied I could hear the hissing of steam, and the roaring as of a mighty fire.

The way in which my boat was shaken satisfied me that an earthquake had accompanied the eruption, while every now and then loud claps of thunder, with quick succeeding and vivid lightning, warned me to prepare for a storm. My sail was closely furled, and then, for greater safety, my mast was taken down. My eye again reverted to the burning mountain.

The action of the crater was intense. One gory jet followed another in quick succession, its crimson hue darkening and deepening from its first issue, till it fell again into the hot pit whence it came.

In about half an hour the centres of intensity seemed to abate their fury, the jets were less and less rapid, and soon a dusky light alone seemed to flicker on the top of the mountain. A few minutes more and nothing was visible but a vast column of smoke, rising like some huge giant to the skies, where it hung, a dense and murky cloud. It was still calm, and no event of any consequence occurred to disturb us till dawn.

The clouds did not clear away; the sun rose fiery red in a bank of vaporous fog, and the sea looked a heavy blue, while the crater vomited forth dense clouds of smoke. What was now to be done?

The probabilities were very much against the volcanic island being inhabited; or if it had once been, might not that fearful eruption have destroyed the poor wretches who had made it their home?

About an hour after dawn I saw a dense cloud whirl-

ing round and forming itself into a trumpet-shaped tube, bent to an angle of sixty degrees or more with the sea. I saw another, more fully formed, rise from the sea, in position and appearance like a cone ; then the tube from the cloud, like a huge engine-hose, descended and joined the other. In the centre, the diameter of the column was about three feet, but seven or eight times as thick at the two extremities.

Having effected this junction, it became like a hollow cylinder of water and vapour, extended in a somewhat oblique direction from the sea to the cloud.

As the wondrous column approached, I observed that it had a whirling motion as if fluids were sucked up from below.

Then the pillar became gradually small from below, and soon it disappeared entirely. The heavily-weighed clouds were rent by the weight of water, and a deluge of rain was seen falling immediately around the spot. It was a water-spout.

My delight may be conceived when the danger was over. It was a narrow escape, as I had heard of large ships being sent down by one of these columns ; and when breaking on land, they have been known to wash away houses and drown the inhabitants, while trees have been rent up by them, and valleys flooded.

My mind soon recovered its tone ; when, as a relief from the confinement of the boat, I began picking up fish, and amusing myself with the gambols of my dog. But a chill, which went to my bones, warned me of a change of wind and a coming storm.

To attempt to land in the furious surf of a rocky island would have been madness ; so there was nothing to be done but to face it.

Seizing hold of the rudder, I turned the boat round, stern to the wind, for, had the storm taken her on her broadside she must have capsized. The next minute I was riding on the boiling, hissing waves, my whole energy being devoted to keeping the canoe straight before the wind.

But the billows from behind were increasing in size

and force every instant, and as we flew before the wind, it was with difficulty I prevented my canoe from being pooped.

How long I flew before the blast, what hours came and faded away, what agonies I endured, how many times I appeared to die, and then to revive once more, I cannot say; but I imagine that the storm lasted at least forty-eight hours, during all which time I did not sleep. Exhausted nature could no longer sustain the struggle, when the huge black canopy of the heavens seemed rent in twain, the blue sky shone through clear and bright, the sun danced merrily on the waters, and the wind gradually ceased.

But it was a long time before this was of any advantage to me, for after a severe storm the sea still continues to be dangerous. At last the waves subsided; then eating a mouthful or two and drinking some water, I lay down and sought, beside my dog, that rest and slumber of which I was so painfully in need. It was scarcely evening when I went to sleep. It was long past sunrise when I awoke.

What a change! Not a speck of cloud, not a ripple on the wide ocean. The air was hot, fiery, scorching, so that my first impulse was to drink. Not a drop of water was on board the boat. During the furious tempest I had emptied the keg, while the gourds and calabashes had cracked, and spilled every drop of liquid.

I had only cocoa-nuts to subsist upon until I could make land.

My first task was to step my mast, and then to hoist my sail in such a way as to give me some shelter from the scorching sun. This was certainly an improvement, but only those who have visited the tropics can conceive the intensity of the heat which is experienced in those latitudes, with the sun above your head and not a breath of wind.

At twelve o'clock, the boat cast no shadow on the waters. The sun was vertical, pouring its torrid rays fiercely down.

With nothing to quench my thirst but the contents of

the cocoa-nuts, it became necessary to lean over the side of the boat and bathe my hands and face, than which there is no better way of checking thirst in its earlier stages. But with my sailor-boy education, imagine the shock that went to my heart when I saw a large bottle-nosed shark steadily swimming round the canoe, attended by one or two pilot fish.

Then I made up my mind that I was about to die, and that these awful scavengers of the deep knew it. There is always a slight delirium attendant on thirst, so that the mind is unnaturally affected. Leaning back in the boat, I caught the eye of my dog. His paws were stretched out, his mouth open, his eyes red, fixed and staring, as he lay panting from excessive heat and thirst. Poor Tiger! he was going mad.

I felt sick unto death, but searching in my belt for a knife, I determined to make some defence. To be bitten by the poor, wretched canine friend that had stuck to me so long, was a horrible idea—and I knew not which alternative to prefer, that of being torn to pieces by sharks, or dying slowly of starvation, thirst and rabies.

A whole cocoa-nut was close to me. I contrived to open it without spilling a drop. Precious as the liquor was to me, I held it out to Tiger, who lapped it up with singular pleasure and delight. It was my last nut.

Awful, dreadful and indescribable sensations now came over me. I believe I laughed and cried alternately, then jumped up in the boat, glared over the side, struck at the shark, and did many other mad and foolish things, such as those who suffer from thirst will do.

Several times the frantic expedient of swimming suggested itself, but fortunately I was too much exhausted to try the experiment. On sped the day, and still the incessant feverish thirst tormented me. I began to sing—a sure sign that my head was going—when through my hot eyeballs I saw the sun go down in such wild and gorgeous splendour as I never care to see again.

The last thing I recollect of that frenzied hour was my tossing overboard a lot of provisions, in the vain hope of propitiating the sharks. Then I fell into a stupefied,

heavy slumber, and did not awake till nightfall, when over the still waters came rushing the evening breeze.

This gentle breeze and one or two smart showers revived both myself and my dog: and by the light of a rude lantern I examined my compass, and steered in the direction which I thought right. At morn the burning island was five miles to leeward, and I was driving on before a freshening breeze.

CHAPTER LII.

A VOLCANIC ISLAND.

THE island was arid in the extreme, and the shores seemed unapproachable. Masses of wave-washed stones and of broken lava strewed the rude beach beneath.

I sailed slowly on, watching for the first chance of landing, but all the coast was cavernous and precipitous, admitting in no way of being scaled; while every now and then huge funnel-shaped blow-holes could be seen in the rocks along the shore, through which the spray of a great wave, and even stones were sometimes ejected with force.

At length I came in sight of a small land-locked bay, or bight, which was approached by a fissure between two huge rocks.

After eating a scanty meal, I took a gun, and, leaving my dog to guard the boat, I started on a journey of observation.

I observed in front of me a large and deep subterranean gallery, that appeared to lead into the interior of the island. It was about fifty feet high at the entrance, and soon became a cavern.

It appeared to have no end, and how far it went inland I did not care to examine.

It was an awful place, something like the hall of Eblis described in *Vathek*. There was nothing beautiful about it, but there was something Titanic and sublime in the silence, gloom and vastness of a place seemingly in the

bowels of the earth, where liquid fire had flowed ages ago, and where earthquakes had dislodged and hurled to the ground vast fragments of rocks from the jagged roof.

As there was no chance of this cavern leading anywhere, I turned back, and ascended the slope towards the hill whence the smoke still arose. After climbing a small ascent, I came to an immense field of smooth, flat, unbroken lava. It had evidently once been a huge upland lake of mineral fire, but had been suddenly congealed into a vitreous black rock. The very billows which had been raised on its surface by the wind, were congealed in some places in large swells and hollows—in others, it resembled the surface of the ocean when calm, just as it seems when ruffled by a light breeze. It was a dreary plain, “forlorn and wild, the seat of desolation,” so I hurried on.

Then a little further there was a terrace, like a sunken plain, rent by earthquakes, and strewn with great boulders of lava. At a distance from this I saw the raised brim of a mighty caldron—a hideous, gaping chasm or fire-pit, about four thousand feet above the level of the sea, about fifteen hundred feet deep, and about ten miles in circumference.

It was an awful sight to gaze at the living fires and the boiling caldron, at the blackened perpendicular sides of the vast abyss, steaming and smoking at a million pores, and gleaming all over like a bed of live coals.

To get a better view, I ascended a mound or sulphurous bank, which could be climbed and travelled over in its entire length, though it was still hot. At the extremity of this mound was a ravine, the bottom of which could not be seen, though its edges were overhung by trees and shrubs, that were whitened and crystallized with sulphur.

Hastening from this spot, and skirting the huge crater, I reached the other side of the island, where I encamped.

When night came on, the sight was magnificent, and I never wearied admiring the salient jets and coruscations and beautiful fireworks of the volcano.

In the morning I continued on my way, taking the east side of the crater, and coming on new scenes of wonder every moment. Soon I came to a wild region, broken by abrupt hills and deep glens, and thickly set with shrubs and whortleberries, while thousands of birds seemed to consider it a safe and warm retreat.

As I advanced, the desolation seemed greater than ever; now and then, there was a patch of coarse earth, where whortleberries grew which I eagerly devoured; and here and there a spring of hot or lukewarm water, sometimes sulphurous, bubbled up and trickled away towards the sea; but in this part I saw not the faintest trace of any living thing.

And thus wearily passed another day. At evening I lay down behind a huge boulder, but all night long the heavy rumbling of the interior of the volcano could be heard, especially when I made the earth my pillow.

I awoke unrefreshed, and in no very pleasant mood. My journey, though commenced under such pleasant auspices, was a failure. I was as far off from the great object of my life as ever. All my dear and darling hopes were blasted, and I had exchanged a paradise for a pandemonium.

I was up soon after day-break, and off again on my journey. After ascending a somewhat steep elevation, the character of the country began to change. It was still vastly inferior to my own beautiful home, but as I advanced, it became a little more fertile.

Soon my steps brought me towards the top of lofty cliffs that looked down upon a bay several miles broad, along the shores of which vegetation appeared to have been luxuriant, though now trees were lifted up, their roots laid bare, and the whole economy of nature disturbed by the earthquake.

It must have been a pleasant spot, shielded entirely from the north, west and easterly winds, and no doubt was rich as a fishery, and had its fair stock of birds and other small game. But how to descend and explore the locality was a mystery, and yet was I determined to do it.

The cliff was of goodly height, but the descent did not appear to be very difficult, if I could but get to a ledge about thirty feet below.

Directly above the ledge stood a point of rock projecting out of the soil. My lasso, which was about fifty feet long, I had wound round my body. This I uncoiled and knotted all the way along at intervals of about a foot, and then fastened it to the rock.

I proceeded to the edge of the cliff to make sure that the rope did not chafe, as a fall would have been fatal. The cliff itself was about a hundred feet above the sea, with many deep fissures in its face.

Though on board ship I had never hesitated to climb everywhere, my present undertaking cost me many a tremor. The cord not being made fast below, and thus vibrating like a pendulum, made the task one of great difficulty; while the roar of the sea, and the possible chafing of the rope above, added to my nervousness.

Still I persevered, and when near the end of my rope, I was startled to find myself at the mouth of a large and gloomy cave, whence rushed, with a whirr and a wild twitter, some hundreds of small birds, which I recognised as the *Hirundo esculenta*.

I almost let go my hold, so much did this discovery move me. I was hungry and athirst, and here was one of the greatest delicacies on earth within my reach. These birds are so highly prized that they are collected in all the islands adjacent to China, and form an article of commerce of extreme value; the more rocky and precipitous islands yielding the larger quantity.

The moment my eye fell upon them, I not only knew them, but I knew also that the cavern contained the better part of the treasure—the edible birds' nests. I had often seen and read of these little birds, but I had never before come upon their quarters. Ever restless, ever in motion; in form and feather they looked like a connecting link between the common swallow and the smallest of the petrel tribe.

Sometimes they are seen skimming low to the edge of the water, as if they were taking up some substance; at

other times they are beheld darting, turning and twisting in the air, as if they were in earnest pursuit of fleet-winged insects. Yet it is asserted by all naturalists, and I can fully corroborate the statement, that the keenest observer cannot detect anything upon which they really do feed. The natives of the Indian Archipelago, where they are chiefly found, assert that they feed upon insects and other minute creatures floating amid the scum on the surface of the sea; then, by some peculiar arrangement of the digestive organs, the bird, from its bill, produces the clear, glutinous and strange stuff of which the nests are made. These nests present a singular appearance, and resemble long filaments of very fine vermicelli, one part coiled over the other, without any regular system, and then glued together by transverse rows of the same material.

Their shape is somewhat like the bowl of a gravy-spoon split in half longitudinally, and in every way they are smaller than swallows' nests. The little bird fixes the straight edge of it against some rock, generally selecting a dark and shady fissure in a cliff, or some cave high up in a cliff, or else a rock whose base is washed by the waves of the restless sea.

The only hypothesis which ever appeared satisfactory to me was, that the strange swallow that is the architect of these nests, is a night bird, and that really it never feeds by day. Indeed, it rarely happens that anyone has ever seen them, except in the early morn or late at night, or perhaps now and then in the deep shadow of some tall and overhanging cliff. They appear systematically to avoid the sunlight and the broad glare of day.

All this flashed across my mind as I hastily *ascended* my knotted rope, which I found safe above, but took care to make more secure against chafing, by placing a lot of grass under the place where the pressure was greatest. The reason of my hasty ascent was twofold. I had seen near the top of the cliff a tree of resinous character, from which I quickly peeled off some bark, and manufactured a few large torches, that would give a powerful and glaring light. Then I cut a long pole, fastened my

calabash to my side, and again descended, this time with less precaution than before. I soon stood upon the narrow ledge of rock which led into the cave, whence issued odours, not of myrrh and frankincense, while a black and dreary darkness pervaded the interior.

I thought I was in my serpent cave again, for no sooner did the torch blaze up than it proved a signal for the most infernal din with which the human tympanum was ever attacked; the tiny chirp of the strange little swallows was taken up and multiplied a thousand times by the beautiful echoes of the cavern, whilst huge bats flew around me, not only endangering my light, but threatening to drive me off the narrow ledge into the dark and gloomy depths below.

At length the din decreased, and I was able to see that, at its entrance, the cavern was low. I then saw the nests sticking to the roof, and, aided by my pole, I soon got down as many as I could carry. Then casting my lighted torch down the rocks, I continued my descent, and though in places I had to creep down where only a gull could have obtained footing, I at last gained the beach.

The torch, still alight, had fallen under a tree, where I at once made a fire, and placed thereon two cocoa-nut shells full of the nests, with a little water.

While waiting for my cooking to be finished, I sat down and smoked a pipe, thinking the while what a fortune might have been made if the contents of that cavern could have been used to freight a schooner. The traffic in these nests is a most lucrative one, and employs a large amount of labour and capital. But the loss of life from this trade is enormous. It is said by old and experienced travellers that, on an average, two out of five men employed come to a violent death in the pursuit of this delicacy, which is sold at forty dollars a catty, or nine pounds sterling per one pound and a quarter weight.

The peculiar value and choiceness of the nests depends on their translucent whiteness and their entire freedom from feathers and dirt; the very best quality being of

course those which have not been lined nor used by the unfortunate swallow.

The fact is, these nests are nothing but a mass of pure gelatine. They have no taste, but, boiled in cocoa-nut milk, they are very nice. On this occasion I had to put about half an ounce of salt water into the soup to make it even palatable.

Having partaken of this soup it revived me greatly, and I rose like a giant refreshed. Slinging my gun on my shoulder, I clutched the pole, and taking a farewell glance at my swinging lasso, I plunged into the thicket on the shores of the bay, to explore its mysterious precincts.

No sooner did my feet touch the soft and silvery sand of the beach than, with a wild exclamation, I fell upon my knees beside a long, thin and dark mass, jammed in between some rocks that had been upheaved by the earthquake.

It was the broken, crushed and mangled remains of Pablina's canoe.

Quickly my eyes were cast about, with a horrible sensation of fear. If the canoe was thus ruthlessly destroyed, what had become of the girl? I sat down, fainting and helpless. My heart beat wildly, as if it would break, for never in the whole course of my adventurous career had such a dread as this come upon me.

I had parted from her with bitter sorrow, but the hope remained that some day we might be re-united.

Now all hope appeared to have vanished, for there, where I sat on that sandy shore, I expected to find her mangled body, if indeed I did not light upon a pile of bones, at which some jackal or hyena had been gnawing.

Rising to my feet, I took the pole in my hand and began to beat the bushes, but with such horror and dread upon me, that I shuddered as I touched the yielding boughs. One thing alone reassured me. Not a sign of the foul scavengers of the tropics was to be seen, even in mid air, where, floating aloft, they look down in search of what they may next devour.

I had to scramble through briars, over rents in the

earth, through chasms of uprooted trees, and over toppling and unsteady rocks; but I found nothing. What did this portend, and how came that lorn and crushed canoe into that bay? Where was its mistress? for that it was hers, I had not the least doubt.

It was a riddle I could not solve in any way. Still I would not give it up—I would search every inch of ground—I would walk over it in every direction to unravel this mystery. I called her name, and the huge rocks gave it back in rich melodious echoes that went to my very heart. I had not heard my own voice for some time, and it sounded pleasant.

Hark! what is that distant cry? I listen with all my ears. It is the bark of a dog. There can be no doubt of it—a loud, prolonged bark and howl, which is to me incomprehensible. It cannot be Tiger, for he is miles away on the other side of the island.

I pressed my head with my hands, and tried to think calmly, but it was in vain. Wild fancies would rush into my brain, and all but drive me mad. Again I cried out, and this time, long ere the echo of the rocks had died away, the barking was renewed. I sat down upon that sad and lonely beach, and thought. It was no time for hasty or premature decision. There was some mystery, which was not to be fathomed in a hurry.

As night was now coming on, I endeavoured to calm my perturbed spirits. Nothing more could be done ere morning; so I made my way again to where my camp had been fixed, and after another meal of soup, I composed myself to sleep.

It came but fitfully; not that long, heavy and refreshing slumber which is more conducive to health and strength than even meat and drink; but in little dozes, from which one is awakened with a start just as he reaches the still and silent land of dreams. Some of the awakenings were cruel, for they tore her from my arms, and again gave me over to doubt and despair.

And thus the night passed drearily, and dawn was welcomed with delight.

My first impulse was to ascend to the summit of the

cliffs, and endeavour to find out some clue to the strange mystery. With this view, using my pole with a dexterity that was the result of early habits, I clambered up to the cavern, at the mouth of which still hung my knotted lasso.

Just as I was about to ascend the cliff, I saw a streak of light fall into a distant part of the cavern. At once the idea flashed across my mind that this was the way by which the bay was reached, and that my best plan would be to pursue it.

The birds and bats were still flying about, but less noisily than before; so, passing my pole forward, I entered the dark and gloomy fissure.

The way was smoother than I expected, so that I had no difficulty in approaching the spot where the light began to prevail. I was now in the centre of the cavern. It was lofty, and here and there fissures and holes let in a dubious and indistinct light. I looked warily around, and saw that the cavern went on, and peering into the kind of passage which presented itself to me, again I perceived a glimmer of light in the distance.

This then was my road. It had hitherto ascended towards the summit of the cliff, but now the path was slightly descendant, until at last it became level, when, gazing as through an open archway, a scene never to be forgotten presented itself.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

A SMALL lake starting from the immediate entrance of this strange tunnel was dotted here and there with fairy-like islands, on which I could clearly distinguish some huts, erected with considerable care.

This was no doubt the village of the gentle tribe of Indians to which my beloved Pablina belonged. It was strange that no one should be stirring, that not a sign of any canoe or raft could be seen. Hastily wading through

a shallow run, I made for a narrow ledge of land that skirted the water, and hurried with frantic speed to find some means of crossing to the island on which I observed the village.

In five minutes more I was startled by the discovery of a bridge of rudely fashioned planks, which was laid from the shore to the first island. This proved to be the case with the channel between the several islands, until I was close to that on which the village was situated.

Moving with the caution of a man who knows not what may next occur to him, I crossed the last bridge. I was soon in the village, but it had been deserted in a hurry, for many articles of use lay scattered on the ground.

The great convulsion had evidently reached to this spot, as the huts were cracked and ready to fall. The first I entered was evidently, to my fancy, only the sleeping place of two young women, for on each side of the hut was a rude couch, covered with hay and straw of a coarse kind, plucked from the neighbouring hills.

My heart beat with strange sensations as I examined this chaste retreat, and it was with difficulty that I at last tore myself away to examine the rest of the island village. Next to this little hut was a larger one, built very like those of the inhabitants of the prairies of North America. It had a small door and two windows, and a projecting roof.

It had a few rough stools; something in the shape of a table; while a truckle bed in a corner, made with coarse sticks and grass matting, proclaimed a certain degree of ingenuity. Some fishing spears and rude landing nets, with certain half-finished hooks and points, were on the table, where also stood a pile of gourd plates, most certainly cut with a knife.

I sat down, overwhelmed with emotion. There could be no doubt that the little tribe or family which inhabited this village were of a civilized turn. Not a sign of any warlike propensities could be seen, and doubtless with this tribe Pablina dwelt, until the terrific eruption and earthquake of a few days back had driven them to seek some more hospitable shore.

Sorrowfully I came into the open air and gazed around. The huts were seven in number. In all were evidences of civilization of some kind. There were in one a knife and an axe of rude iron, ozier baskets and grass mats of ingenious and elegant construction ; while there remained some scattered specimens of a kind of red earthenware, made by the women of certain African tribes, and burned by stacking them with layers of wood between the rows.

There were a number of calabashes, in some of which were the remains of a meal that had been in preparation when they were disturbed by the eruption.

I gladly ate of one of the preparations, which I found to be Indian corn mixed with a strong sauce made of beef and fish, and flavoured with salt and Cayenne pepper, which grew in abundance round the village. It was very palatable and nutritious. There were yams, too, piled up in a corner.

But it was vain to stand there, regretting the absence of the owners of this peaceful retreat. All I could do was to continue my search.

I then followed a pathway that led me across one or two smaller islands to the skirt of a wild and gloomy wood, over which the trees arched so densely as to exclude the light of day, but fortunately the underwood was very slight, and did not in any way interfere with my progress.

What might have been the case had the eruption not interfered, I know not, but the woods were utterly abandoned by every living thing.

About a mile from the village, *following a beaten path*, I saw an opening in the forest where the trees were not so close together, and where a lovely little clearing exhibited to view its bright array of flowers and shrubs.

But what startled me was a clear and pellucid pool, in the centre of which bubbled up a spring, and on its borders was a graceful bower all overgrown with creeping and flowering plants—a very faint imitation of my summer-house on the island.

I entered hurriedly, and sat down upon a seat. Then looking upon the ground I saw distinctly the impression

of two pairs of naked feet. One I could have sworn was the mark of Pablina's foot, but the other turned out the toes in a way decidedly European and civilized.

There could be no mistake about this. Nearly all savage or half-savage nations, when walking, turn the toes inwards. This in part arises from their style of following and leaving a trail, always putting one foot right before the other, and thus leaving, as it were, the imprint of only a single foot. But whatever the reason may be, that they do it is a well-known fact.

Now this little naked well-shaped foot was evidently that of one who had been taught to walk, and by a European teacher.

Who could she be, who, cast on that desolate shore, had taken up her abode with savages.

But why should I be certain it was a girl? It might be the foot of a youth. As this idea flashed across my mind, the feeling of anger, jealousy and despair which agitated my whole frame were something awful. The very thought that the solitude inhabited by Pablina was shared by one of my own sex was enough to drive me mad. And yet, what right had I to be angry that she should prefer some one else to me? It was the privilege of her sex, and why should she not exercise it?

But again my eyes fell upon the elegant footmark, and a careful examination convinced me that it was, after all, a girl, and undoubtedly one whose feet had been confined within the usual tight-fitting boots of civilized countries.

What could this mean? A wild and almost insane idea had once or twice flashed across my imagination, but had been dismissed as soon as admitted. It was impossible, it could not be true; and yet why had my misfortune, my unlucky fate, set me on my journey just at the moment when the mystery I would unravel was only deeper and more intricate?

When I strolled back to the shore, my canoe lay perfectly safe about a quarter of a mile from where I stood, and my dog was close at hand, engaged in an occupation of a most singular kind.

There was a very shallow part of the bay about twenty feet from the canoe, and when I first looked, Tiger was lying down as flat as he could, watching. Suddenly he leaped up, dashed into the water and seemed to be driving something before him towards the shore. He was fishing. Then I saw him come out of the water with a good-sized salmon, or such-like fish, in his mouth, which he there and then devoured.

I now resolved to perform a journey round the island in my boat, in the hope of finding Pablina and her friends encamped on some pleasant spot on the coast, or of tracing the mode of her departure. But it was first necessary to fetch my gun and my lasso, which occupied so much time that I was compelled to pass the night on shore.

At daybreak, however, I descended the rocks and rejoined my faithful Tiger. My canoe was then impelled out of the bay, the sail set, and, with a wet sheet and a flowing sea, we started on our journey, nor stopped until compelled to go ashore in search of shell-fish for a meal. When I returned to the boat it was high and dry. The tide had ebbed and left her safe on the sands.

This was a very serious matter, still there was no help for it but to wait until the tide flowed again. In the meantime, I occupied myself in kindling a fire and roasting some mussels and other shell-fish, of which I made a rather indifferent meal. Night was approaching, however, ere the returning tide enabled me to get afloat again; but as I had slept during the heat of the day, I preferred starting at once, even though night was coming on.

As the sea was tolerably smooth and the wind steady, steering was comparatively easy, so I jammed the tiller to starboard, and amused myself with smoking and gazing out upon the moonlit sea.

Suddenly I started. Something had shot across my path. Eagerly clutching my telescope, I saw that a canoe, manned by two natives, was paddling towards me with a caution and circumspection that seemed somewhat inimical. But being well armed, I did not fear two naked

savages ; so, immediately going about, I steered direct for them.

With equal rapidity they turned and fled. The swiftness with which they used their paddles was miraculous. They were making for the shore at an angle which, if I continued my course, would soon bring us close together.

The perigua was then twisted round, and ere I could make out their intention, they were paddling directly in the wind's eye, in which direction it was of course difficult for me to follow them.

Still I would not give up the chase ; but going about once more, I trimmed my sail, and keeping close to the wind, I followed relentlessly in their track.

My motives for persevering were of a mixed character. I had caught only a very faint glimpse of the two paddlers, but it appeared to me that the one in the bow of the boat was Pablina, so I strained every nerve in order to reach them ; still my canoe did not seem to gain upon them. But just as we appeared to be getting quite out of sight of land, they altered their course, and made with increased rapidity for the island.

I turned after them with all speed, but it was evident that the fugitives had been watching my movements with a keenness of observation quite wonderful, for they now took a course a little off the parallel, so that we should avoid meeting. As they were to windward of me they could run down upon me whenever they liked, but I could not make one inch more to the eastward than I did, even to save my life.

But what were these untutored children of nature about to do ? Sitting firmly in their tiny boat, the bold mariners made ready. They have been too quick for me. They are within a very few yards of the beach—they run their boat aground, they lift it up, and disappear in the woods.

What was to be done ? To think of pursuing two natives at night, even with a dog and gun, was out of the question. My best course was to anchor on that reef-protected shore, which I did by using my lasso as a cable.

I then lay down, and soon went off into a sound slumber. When I awoke, it was some time past sunrise.

The shore was wrapped in a most singular mirage. Objects a hundred yards off were utterly undefined. A crow, a stone, or a bit of black wood, looked as lofty as the trunk of a tree; pelicans were exaggerated to the size of ships with all studding-sails set, and the whole ground was wavy and seething, as though seen through the draught of a furnace. It was a most singular illusion, but it did not last long.

When the mist rose, I pushed for the shore, which was arid and covered by dried-up pools. Having secured my canoe by means of the lasso, I hurried to the spot where I had seen the perigua run ashore. But it was gone.

Could all the events of the previous night have been a dream? No; the mark of the canoe, and the foot-prints of natives were clearly visible on the shore.

I followed the track for some distance, until I came to a little fountain, beside which I saw a small foot-print in the sand. I knew it was Pablina's.

What was to be done? To leave my boat was dangerous, as the natives might come upon it and ransack its contents; but then, I could not bear the uncertainty under which I laboured. My gun, my dog and my lasso were all I had brought, and with these I proposed to give chase.

For some time the trail was not difficult to follow, and I soon became aware, from the marks on the sand, that the two fugitives were carrying a heavy weight—their canoe, of course. This aroused me to active exertion, as it proved their settled determination to flee from me. The trail now entered a dense growth of underwood and bushes, through which I know not really how they made their way. In this wood there appeared nothing alive but black and white crows, that disdained to move as we passed.

After half an hour I came upon a wide and rapid stream, and here the trail ended.

It was, however, impossible to gain the other side of

the river at this point, so I traversed its banks for some distance, and at last succeeded in crossing it. But I had lost the trail of the fugitives, so I hurried away in the direction in which I thought it was most likely they had gone. It was over a wide undulating plain, black with dense thorn bushes. My progress was now extremely slow, for the way was rude; but about evening, a last undulation having been surmounted, I saw before me the sea, and in the distance the coast of Africa.

But where were the fugitives? I took my telescope, and swept the waters.

There was the canoe; but what do I see beyond? A village, with numerous canoes hauled up on the beach. My heart sank within me, for, in the company of a hostile tribe, would not Pablina be as much lost to me as if she were gone to the interior wilds of the vast continent? But I was desperate, and would not be defeated, so I determined to risk the visit, even if it resulted in my being taken prisoner.

But to do this it would be necessary to return to my boat, for which I was too much exhausted that night. I had, therefore, to camp once more in the open air.

CHAPTER LIV

MY SECOND SHIPWRECK.

BEFORE the sun was up I started, but this time I took a different way along the coast. It was an arduous task; and after a day spent in almost Herculean exertions, I reached the spot where my boat lay rocked upon the slowly moving waves.

It was evening ere I set sail. Then, away before a rattling breeze went the canoe—away, with hope at the helm, and impatience at the bow!

After skirting the coast for some time, the dim shadowy outline of the mainland became visible, and I stood directly for it; but it was soon evident that I was being swept past it with a rapidity quite alarming. I

was in a powerful current, which it would require all my ingenuity to stem.

Instead, therefore, of steering head on to the land, as I had been, I drew aft my sheet, and steered a little to the south of the course I intended to follow, in order to counteract the influence of the current, which swept me, almost hopelessly, to the northward. However, I made but little leeway, though the puffs and light winds were very vexatious and annoying. At length I seemed likely to realize my expectations, for the land seemed to be only half a mile off, and I could see the village towards which I was heading fast.

But soon I found that, between myself and the shore, there ran a line of white water, which I knew to be a reef almost level with the sea, and over it the tide was running with great rapidity. That there must be some channel I was certain; but how in that dark gloomy night was I to discover it? No time was to be lost. The tide was sweeping me past, as if I was being carried down a mill-race; and, trusting to my Indian girl to assist me in my trouble, I fired both barrels as a signal.

In an instant the village was alive. I saw men and women, some undoubtedly in a kind of European costume, rushing about with torches, which were lighted at a fire that burned in the centre of the semi-circle of huts. They called loudly to me, they waved their torches, they ran right into the water; but the roar of the surf drowned every word.

The conviction flashed across my mind that these were English; and, letting go the rudder, I took up my telescope. Then, from a terrible revulsion of feeling, I became insensible.

When I recovered, I was gliding along the coast with great rapidity, wind and tide both against me. The village was out of sight—the village which, I felt certain, contained not only Pablina, but my father, my mother, my uncle, my sisters and my cousin! I do not say that I recognized them, for that was manifestly impossible at so great a distance.

I was now being swept past the spot with fearful rapidity, and by no ingenuity of mine could I control my fate.

Alas! how much in this life depends on trifles. I had not left my anchor at home, as the Dutchman in the storm found he had done, but I had never thought of making one.

Still the gale rose, and I almost felt that I had done with life; yet instinct, in our worst troubles, prompts us to save that which we affect to despise. I looked to leeward. The sky was hot and sultry. I knew what that indicated. Unless I reached some shelter before the gale fell upon me with all its force, escape would be hopeless.

I had just time to lower the sail when the canoe heeled over, and away I flew before the still rising blast. This lasted an hour. Then a dark mass loomed in the distance, the canoe struck, and I was cast upon a sandy beach, once more the shipwrecked Sailor Crusoe.

In the morning I found that I had been wrecked upon a naked and arid shore, my boat knocked to pieces, my powder all wet, and everything else destroyed. I had nothing left but an empty gun and my faithful dog.

Such misfortunes were enough to have broken the heart of any man. All my labours were in vain; all that I had endured, done and suffered, were now unavailing. The work of years had to be gone over again.

Still it was needless to despond; so picking up my now useless gun, to carry it as a club or defensive weapon, I determined to explore the interior. But one glance sufficed. I knew where I was. I was within half-a-mile of my cave.

Then I fell upon my knees and thanked Heaven which had been so merciful to me in this fearful strait, and even the regret I felt at other disappointments was mitigated by this. My dog, too, appeared to be aware that he was at home, for he jumped about, gambolled, and then suddenly took to his heels in search of his mates.

That night I slept in my old cave, being too much exhausted to look after my animals and plantation, all of which had been long neglected.

My stakes and transplanted trees had progressed very rapidly. They had shot upwards and sideways until they had become a tangled mass, and it was quite a task for me, every time I had been absent a little while, to cut for myself a path by which to enter my retreat.

What more was to be done to fortify my cave I scarcely knew; but that some additional defence should be provided, in case of a furious onslaught, seemed quite necessary, so I adopted the following plan. The greatest danger lay in the discovery of my pathway. That once in the hands of an enemy, any number might force their way in. As Pablina had done so once, it might be done again.

To obviate this a number of stout, young trees were cut down, the branches roughly lopped off, and planted firmly, with cross beams, on each side of the entrance. From one of these posts a heavy gate was suspended, and securely fastened so as not to be opened from the outside. This, at all events, guarded against surprise.

I then took down all my guns, and having made a stout frame, I laid them at about three feet from the ground, all pointing towards the gate. But, as they would be spoiled in the rainy season, I erected over them a stout slanting roof, corked their muzzles, and tied a piece of skin securely over their pans.

My next task was to make a ladder, by which secretly to leave my retreat, or to reconnoitre in case of a siege. When finished it was not very handsome, but it served the purpose for which it was made.

I thought that I was now a match for any number of naked savages who might venture to attack me. But there still remained the dangers of a long siege. They might find traces of me, and, unable to discover my actual abode, might wander about the island and render close concealment necessary. It is true, I had ample store of water, I had grain and dry vegetables, but I wanted animal food.

On the other side of the pool from that which I occupied, was a space between the palm trees and the rock, where scarcely anything but grass grew. It was about

seven or eight feet wide by seventy to eighty feet long. The palm trees were so dense with shrubs, that with very little addition it could be made impenetrable.

Here I proposed to place a gazelle or two, and as many fowls as I could, there being ample food for both in this humid spot. I had the gazelles, but the other creatures were yet to be found. I had seen nothing resembling our common barn-door fowl, but it mattered little to me what they were, provided they laid eggs. As to ostriches, they were out of the question.

CHAPTER LV

THE LAUGHING JACKASS.

A FEW days after the completion of my fortress, which now assumed a most formidable aspect in my eyes, I resolved to make an excursion to obtain a supply of fowls.

I took the pains on this occasion to keep my dogs in a leash, so that they might not startle the birds which it was my firm belief I was about to catch; though how it was to be done was not as yet exactly defined in my own mind.

I felt confident that it was in and on the skirts of the woods which were near my bower on the lake, that I should most easily discover what I was in search of; so in this direction I took my way early in the morning, mounted on my horse, and with Tiger—to his great disgust kept within bounds by a rope—trotting by my side. I moved very slowly, with a view to listen for the forest sounds, by which chiefly I could hope to track my wished-for prey.

My accoutrements consisted of a gun, a net similar to that with which I had captured my gazelles, my sword-saw, my knife, a bundle of twine, a small supply of provisions and a gourd of water.

Thus equipped, I advanced quietly and cautiously, when suddenly I heard, quite close to me, the crowing of cocks, the screaming of cockatoos, the chattering of the

common parrot, and the howling of the jackal, in delightful concert.

Unable to make out what it was, I crawled out, gun in hand, to solve the mystery. The noises appeared to proceed from a small, thickly-wooded ravine, towards which I crept slowly along, and halted.

The sounds were close in front of me, in a little open glade covered with high grass. All the sounds I have alluded to were again repeated, but only one at a time. Having a shrewd guess now what it all meant, I watched, and presently I saw a slight movement in the bushes, at no great distance from my hiding-place, followed by a scratching and picking noise in the high grass.

Now and then I saw some long feathers protrude above the grass; and, carried away by an impetuosity which was certainly very foolish, considering my object, I fired, when, to my annoyance and mortification, up rose a magnificent cock lyre-bird, which walked off into the bush, with tail erect.

A loud laugh startled me, and made me jump to my feet, when, on the bough of a tree, I saw a bird closely resembling what is commonly called the laughing-jackass, literally grinning at my misfortune. I strode away, humiliated, annoyed and angry with myself.

But I was determined to have this bird, as well as the female, which was sure to be near. With my net, therefore, I constructed a snare, which I set in the little open glade. No sooner had I done this than I made a precipitate retreat, for I had discovered the reason why the cock selected that feeding-place. It was a perfect nest of leeches, upon which this bird feeds habitually.

This peculiar bird is plentiful in the islands discovered by the late Captain Cook, and is called a pheasant, or lyre-bird (*menera superba*), but is, properly speaking, a thrush. It is about the size of a small fowl, of a dirty brown colour, approaching to black in some parts, while its beauty consists in the magnificent tail of the cock bird, which is in shape exactly like a lyre.

But what is this sound? Again I hear its strange imitative voice. It seldom cares about its own natural

note, but rejoices in imitating all the sounds of the forest. I raised my head, and there it was again, strutting round in a circle. Quick as thought I pulled my string, and then darted into the open glade to find to my inexpressible delight that both cock and hen were my prisoners.

This was no bad beginning, and now that my trap was provided, it was not many days ere I had a goodly supply of birds, with which I returned to my residence highly delighted. Their wings were clipped, and this precaution taken, they were let loose in my fowl-yard, where with some care, they throve and often supplied me with young birds and eggs. The nest of the lyre-bird was about three feet in circumference and one foot deep, having an orifice at one side. The female was a very unattractive bird, having a poor tail, nothing like the male. It lays one egg, of a slate colour with black spots.

I had done all that was in the power of one man to do, to prepare myself against any emergency. It now behoved me therefore to look to other things, and amongst these was the care of my plantation, which had been neglected and was running to waste.

Thinking always of the dangers of a siege, I looked much to the interior comforts of my hut—improved my bed-room and sitting-room. My store-room was made as impervious to vermin as possible, while two dogs were always placed within it day and night.

It is scarcely necessary to say that on no occasion did I waste the produce of my hunting. All skins were scrupulously saved, and prepared for use in the best way I could, for coats, breeches and shoes, or rather those anomalous things called mocassins.

A piece of skin of the proper size was cut, say a foot by a foot; then holes were bored all round, through which leather thongs were passed, drawn up round the ankle; and the shoe was complete.

In such employments, in reading, and in smoking my pipe, the winter season passed quickly away. But still I was glad to herald the joyous return of the warm sun, which once more gladdened all nature. As usual, my first task was to visit my plantation, my piggery and my

gazelle valley. The first was doing well, the second required considerable thinning, which was useful for my larder and for my ravenous dogs; while the last seemed to increase in beauty every year.

The trickling rill, the old rice swamp, the young palm trees, with the vivifying influence of so many animals, had made the place a perfect little paradise; while both gazelles and ostriches had vastly increased in number. I could now allow myself an ample supply of butcher's meat and milk every day, while on many occasions an ostrich egg was added to my luxuries.

But it was quite clear that more space was required for them, on account of the rapid increase in their numbers.

Beyond the valley in which my gazelles had hitherto been confined, there was another of even more curious formation. It seemed, for all the world, like the crater of an extinct volcano. Towards the centre it gradually sloped to a lake, but the sides were precipitous.

I now removed the barrier with which I had blocked up the gap between the two valleys, and every day I drove the whole party into the farther one until it was cropped as neatly as if it had been artificially mowed.

When I was cast upon that deserted spot, I little expected that I should ever have reason to complain of a superabundance of riches, but so it was. I was now so wealthy that it was absolutely necessary to thin my flocks; and had it not been for the ravenous appetite of my dogs, it would have been my duty to have allowed nearly all my pigs and some of my gazelles to abscond.

The pigs were of very little use to me, except for feeding my dogs. I found, from observation, that eating pork is not at all wholesome in hot countries, so my use of it was very sparing.

My cave was so badly ventilated that during several days of the hot months, I slept under an improvised hut in the valley of the gazelles. I mention this because it was the means of my being gratified by my first view of a delightful spectacle—that of the Southern Cross.

It was a beautiful sight. It is to this glorious revolving cross, first seen by the traveller after passing the

Cape de Verd Islands, that the southern hemisphere is indebted for its celestial beauty. It is a perfect glory in the heavens, and by its means, both the variation of the needle and the hour of the day can be told. The latter, however, was a complicated process which I could not carry out for want of instruments and the latest nautical books.

I knew that if one watched it from the summer solstice, which is on the 21st of June, to the northern autumnal equinox on the 21st of September, and noted the right ascension of the sun, with some small calculation the exact hour of the day might be told.

But I had little leisure for such speculations, and yet it set me thinking. By the recurrence of the rainy season, I knew that I had been four years on the island, but if I were to live there much longer, even the years might be forgotten. To remedy this I resolved to make myself a calendar—a thing which only the multitudinous duties that befall a man in my position could have made me neglect so long.

For this purpose I set up in the valley of the gazelles one post for the years, upon which I made four notches; a second, much larger, was put up for the months; and a third for the days.

From that hour this duty was never neglected, and when I started on an expedition I attached a tally to my waist, on which I notched the days, and on my return, I transferred them to my calendar, which, if it was of no use, was rather a pleasurable occupation than otherwise.

Thus passed the peaceful days after my return from my adventurous voyage to the volcanic island.

CHAPTER LVI.

I TAKE A HOLIDAY.

THERE is such a thing as feeling one's self good. Now, having provided against almost every possible contin-

gency ; having sown that I might reap ; having fortified myself that I might be able to fight for my life ; having seen to the interests of my flocks and herds, and done for my plantation all that was in one man's power to do, I had my time upon my hands, and, sooth to say, I felt very much like a wealthy English country gentleman, ready for amusement for amusement's sake, without any reference to its utility or advantage.

In fact I wanted to kill time ; and many a man has done a worse thing. Every great statesman, ruler and conqueror has been of the same opinion. Some in their hours of recreation have taken to cards, some to tennis, some to jumping as high possible, like a certain cardinal ; some to fiddling, about the least sensible of ways ; and some to wickedness to which I will not further allude. Now it has always been my opinion that what we do purely from a sense of duty, or of necessity, does not sufficiently recreate the mind.

Let nobody persuade you, my dear boys, that incessant application is good. The human mind is like a cart wheel, and requires continual greasing, only that instead of grease it wants amusement. The harder a man works, the more highly-wrought are the faculties of his brain, and the more real and positive his labour, the more heartily should he enter upon any enjoyment that is not criminal.

Strain not the delicate fabric of the mind, which, like the panting horse dragging heavy loads up hill, is all the better for those merciful halts generally provided in countries purely mountainous. Not even the authority of a parent should condemn a child to grind unceasingly at any work.

But perhaps this disquisition may only be to palliate my own feeling of intense pleasure, when I one day made up my mind to have, what at school we used to call a "spree." And what think you, boys, was the way in which I proposed to enjoy the whole holiday I had made up my mind to give myself ?

I determined to have a day's fishing.

Now, it is useless to conceal the matter, the prepara-

tions for the day did cost me many hours of preliminary labour. But then, to tell the truth, it was in the evening, and did not interfere with my daily labours. There was a rod to make, lines to twist, hooks to contrive and then bait, for I had the audacity to intend fly-fishing.

All this may appear very puerile; but let anyone reflect upon my forlorn and deserted condition, obliged to fall back upon myself wholly for support and amusement. Still, I must confess that the preparations for my day's angling gave me more delight than any great hunt of the *Grand Monarque* ever afforded him.

The rod was a master-piece. I had carefully selected a number of the best bamboos of various sizes, which I removed to my hut and seasoned thoroughly. Then they were cut into proper lengths, the points hollowed out, and so cut and shaved as to fit admirably. The delight which I felt in anything so simple, was wonderful; but I verily believe that I stood in awe of my own talents.

It may appear strange, but this day of boyhood, of real and intense happiness, had been hatching in my mind for months. Many a sly bit of gut I had put aside, and tried to persuade myself that they might turn up one day for some useful purpose; and yet, artful old fox that I was, all the time I intended that they should be elements in my long-meditated day's pleasure.

The line, or rather lines—I had fished too often on the broads and rivers of Norfolk to trust to one—were made with the utmost ease out of gut and cocoa-nut fibre; while the flies were artificially fashioned out of feathers culled from my poultry yard. But the hooks! Here, I confess, I was at a loss for some time, until I bethought me of cutting off a piece from the top of one of my gun barrels by means of the saw-knife.

This was a task which nearly overcame both my courage and perseverance. But at last, with the aid of fire, and by dint of hammering on an anvil of polished stone, I succeeded in making some strong wire, which was then fashioned into hooks of various sizes.

Here was a triumph. Never, since the day when I

caught my first minnow with a crooked pin—and you all know the excitement of that, boys—had I been so happy. In my boyhood's joyous hours, when I knew no care nor thought of sorrow, and when trouble was a stranger to me, I had been passionately fond of this most entrancing of all amusements. I knew every stream within twenty miles of home.

There was one great day in my young life, when with the under-feathers of the partridge's tail for wings, a little red hackle for legs, a hare's ear for a body, and a couple of rats' whiskers for a tail, I made a fly that caught no end of salmon. But I am becoming garrulous, and in my thoughts of the halcyon hours of the past, I am forgetting the necessities of the present.

With my camp equipage fastened on my horse, I started over night for the spot which I had selected. It was a river running to the northward, and as I afterwards found, it was the termination of that which so unceremoniously left my bower lake by the great cavern cataract. It meandered through the richest and most verdant meadows or prairies, with only a tree here and there. It had rapid falls, swift-running shallows, and every other sign of the favourite abode of fish.

My dog Tiger accompanied me. He was still in his prime and powerful, and I knew that I could depend upon him.

I reached my destination about midnight, lighted a fire, devoured a hearty supper, and then lay down to rest. I was up before the dawn, eager as a schoolboy for the fray. It was a warm and sultry day, just as if I had selected it myself; while heavy clouds were scudding across the heavens.

I would not wait for breakfast, but hurried to the river side, put up my rod and began. I don't think I shall ever forget my first cast. I had fitted on three different kinds of bait on my line. It was in a pool beneath a fall. Down went my line with a tug as though I had hooked a ten pound salmon. I ran along the bank for a little while, having never thought of a reel, and then checked the progress of the fish. There was one on each hook.

There were two kinds of graylings and a trout. I saw at once that the inhabitants of that river, probably from never having been fished before, were disposed to be amiable, so I went at it with a will, and before sundown I had killed some fifty or sixty pounds weight.

It was a happy day—there was the feeling of perfect enjoyment—the scenery—the bracing air—and the very idea that it was a holiday had of itself something satisfactory in it.

I knew that I should have a splendid broil. And so it proved, for my dog and myself probably ate more than was good for us. But who thought of prudence that day? I retired to rest early that night.

It was many hours after sunrise when I awoke. I was fresh, invigorated and full of life. Again we enjoyed a broil, and then I sat some time ruminating on the past. I was sadder that morning than usual; although the memory of the previous day was pleasant—so pleasant, indeed, that I resolved to set apart one day in each week for pleasure.

One day in each week for pleasure!

Oh! how my heart then smote me, as it flashed through my mind, that, ever since I had been on that island, I had never once thought of giving one day in so very many weeks to my God.

I was ashamed, humiliated, vexed and irritated with myself; so much so that I solemnly vowed I would never again omit this pre-eminent duty of a Christian. Not that I had ever omitted to thank the Giver of all Good for His mercies; but then, it was only on occasions when I had escaped from some great peril.

I am no advocate for a gloomy Sabbath; but one day ought to be set apart on which more especially to fix our minds on religious thoughts, for in the hurry and bustle of active life we are too apt to postpone such meditation to "a more convenient season." Besides, the Sabbath, as an institution, is one for the health of both body and mind. No civilized nation can do without it; and in proportion as a country keeps it as a day of rest, so is that nation's greatness.

From that hour, unless under unavoidable circumstances, I made it a rule to "remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy."

CHAPTER LVIII.

A HUNGRY THIEF.

ALL this time my thoughts dwelt upon her who had vanished so strangely from my society, and upon that village where, I felt sure, were so mysteriously congregated all those I loved best in the world. But with all my courage, I had not the resolution to consume months in the construction of another canoe, after what had occurred on the last occasion.

Another idea, however, crossed my mind, that if they did not first visit my island, I would make a bold venture to build a raft that would carry my horse, gain the mainland anywhere I could, and ride direct to the village. But it would be a most laborious task to make a raft of sufficient size to bear us across a very rough sea channel, six miles wide.

Then again, nothing was more unlikely than that the dwellers in the white village would remain any length of time on that bleak and arid coast.

This time the risk appeared so great, that even the discovery of that curious marvel of nature, the cork tree, was not sufficient to induce me to begin the construction of a raft.

The cork tree is simply an oak (*quercus suber*). In order to take off the bark, an incision is made from the top to the root of the tree, and, at each extremity, another incision is made round the tree, perpendicular to the first. When the tree is fifteen years old it may be barked for eight years successively; and the quality of the bark improves with the age of the tree. When stripped from the tree, which does not therefore die, the bark is piled up in a pond or ditch, and loaded with heavy stones, to flatten it and reduce it into a tabular form.

It is then removed to be dried, and afterwards it is made up in bales for carriage. If it be not stripped from the tree, it splits and peels off of itself, being forced off by another bark formed underneath.

The cork tree, and the uses to which the bark may be applied, were known both to the Greeks and the Romans. Pliny informs us that the Romans employed it to stop or cork all kinds of vessels; but the use of it for this purpose does not appear to have been common till the invention of glass bottles.

Other vegetable productions have been sometimes employed instead of cork. The *spondias lutea*—a tree which grows in South America, particularly in moist places, and which is there called *monbin* or *monbain*—was sometimes brought to England for the purpose of stopping vessels. The roots of liquorice are applied to the same use; and on this account the plant is much cultivated in Sclavonia, and exported to other countries. A tree called *nyssa*, which grows in North America, has also been found to answer as a substitute for cork. The bark of cork is used in medicine as an astringent. It also makes Spanish black; and some people fancy cork cups. The Egyptians made coffins of cork, which, with a resinous composition, preserved dead bodies uncorrupted. In Spain, they line stone walls with cork. Such are some of its uses.

But a truce to digression, of which, like most old men, I am perhaps too fond.

About three months after the enlargement of my fold, and when the gazelles had been driven back to their original valley, I went one morning, with some attendant animals, to milk my numerous flock, as well as to take away a fat buck for the use of the family. I always took care, however, to slaughter them at a considerable distance from their habitation, not wishing to alarm animals which I knew to be extremely sensitive.

But imagine my horror and indignation when I found the whole herd, less two, crouching up in a corner of the pen, in the utmost terror; while on the ground in front of the enclosure were the mangled remains of two very fine gazelles, being pecked at by some vultures.

My indignation knew no bounds. I could almost have wreaked my vengeance on the vultures, but I contented myself by driving them away with switches, and ascertaining the actual state of things. I examined the ground. I looked at the trail of the savage beasts which had done all this damage, but could not make them out. At length, after carefully considering what was best to be done, I hit upon the following plan, and when sundown approached, I made my preparations.

Near the pen into which all the hungry little animals were driven, there was a grove of very fine trees, to one of which I tied a choice gazelle. Some grain and leaves were placed before it, and then, well provided with ammunition and my double-barrel loaded, I climbed into the branches. The night was dark, but I could see round the valley for some little distance, as my eyes got gradually used to the gloom.

Suddenly I heard the gazelle uttering little plaintive cries, intermingled with a sort of sneeze, which very much resembled a snarl of petulance intermingled with timidity. Then came, in the distance, the sullen roar of a lion. My horror may be conceived.

With a wildly palpitating heart I listened to the varied and lugubrious sounds in the valley. Presently it seemed all alive; there were lions, and tigers, and zebras, and elephants, and hippopotami, and almost every animal of the forest, rushing about in a wild and furious stampede, which to my eyes was certainly more ludicrous than horrible. At length they all halted, and I saw myriads of eyes of every colour under the sun—green, grey, blue, black, bleared, lurid, and every tint between these, glaring at me. I was fast asleep.

And in this uncomfortable position no doubt I slept for many hours, as I afterwards judged by the quick way in which the dawn appeared on the horizon after I awoke.

Suddenly a faint voice, I suppose, awoke me, and then I heard not only the gazelle whining and sneezing, but another sound coming across the plain. It was a drove of hungry wolves.

I knew well the extreme ferocity and tenacity of these

fierce denizens of the forest, which, since my arrival on the island, I had never seen before. This mysterious appearance and reappearance of animals will be, however, strangely explained.

On came a drove of twenty, but in a scattered line; some twenty yards from the tree, some fifty, the majority a hundred. I hastily settled myself. The gazelle under the tree gave forth most heart-rending sounds, and then a wolf, with a hoarse roar, bounded to within three feet of its neck.

I fired!

Back went the wolf tottering. One or two convulsive movements, and all was over. I quickly reloaded the barrel I had fired, as I remarked that the nearest wolves had halted to reconnoitre. There they now were in a kind of circle, hideous in the breaking night, with their red tongues lolling out, and their eyes of fire gleaming in astonishment at the tree.

Then half-a-dozen made a plunge towards the gazelle. I fired both barrels, laming one and killing another. Again they retreated; I reloaded, and after ten minutes, they charged the gazelle with redoubled fury.

Two this time bit the dust; and, as if satisfied with the fearful slaughter, the rest turned tail and fled, none the less quickly that I gave a hearty view halloo.

After a few minutes, every drop of water in my gourd being exhausted, I crawled to the rill that supplied the gazelles, and refreshed myself both with a drink and a wash. I then returned to the scene of my terrible conflict, and hoisted by ropes the whole party of bandits, with their feet just away from the ground, as an example and a warning to other thieves.

This done, I returned to my cave, where I remained all day, having been exceedingly fatigued with my night of combat and watching. I was now about five years older than when I was cast away, which was a serious and melancholy reflection, and drove me to think that in all probability I should end my days there, cut off for ever from all communion with my species.

This made me sad, indeed. I would gladly have hunted

or fished, but I was exhausted and feverish. I felt that an illness was coming upon me, caused by anxiety, the excitement of the contest, and exposure to the night air.

No wonder that I longed for companionship, and for the gentle hand of a nurse. While, however, I had strength I collected my gourds together, filled them with water and placed them behind my bunk, which was safer than my hammock; and every egg which could be found in my poultry-yard, together with some light cakes, I put upon a shelf. Then, cold shiverings coming over me, I lay down in a wild, feverish sort of ague, and in a few minutes I either lost my senses or fell asleep.

When I opened my eyes again, I thought I should have died, I was so weak and prostrated. With difficulty I put out my hand—which was thin and white—to reach a drop of water. I drank it eagerly and fell asleep once more. When I awoke, all fever was gone, and I was able to crawl out of my bunk and search for some fresh eggs, those which I had by my bedside being quite stale. Several raw eggs, with a little dried fish, seemed to do me good, and I sat down under the shade of a palm-tree, to revive myself by the action of the air, which is, after all, nature's best and sweetest restorer for the invalid. I went to bed early that night, and awoke in the morning quite well, but very weak.

Once the malady is over, open-air exercise is the best medicine, so I determined to have a ride. Having saddled my horse, I once more rode forth in search of health and strength. That day I contented myself with a visit to my gazelles, and finding everything in order, I drove them into the inner valley, and returned to my cave; and by taking great care of myself, in one week I was quite well.

CHAPTER LVIII.

A FIGHT WITH THE FANS.

CHANGE of air, even from good to inferior air, is often conducive to health, so, despite my natural dread of cannibals, I determined to visit the bower in my lake home, which I had neglected so long. For this purpose, I loaded both horse and zebra with provisions, tools and materials for fishing and the chase. The journey to the lake occupied two days, for my cattle were heavily laden. The first night I was glad enough to sleep in the zebra's stable myself, as I was too much fatigued to make a raft to cross over to the island.

When I awoke in the morning it occurred to me, that as I was to be some time in my bower, and should be constantly crossing backwards and forwards, some means of conveyance more handy than a raft should be found. The idea of a bark canoe suggested itself, as it would not only be easily made, but easily managed.

Having placed my ladder against a tree which I had chosen for this purpose, I ascended and cut a line half round the trunk, so as to penetrate the bark, which was solid and without a crack. Then having loosened the bark at this part, I next proceeded to bore holes in it, into which I inserted several pieces of strong cord; to these I afterwards fastened my lasso, which I had previously thrown across a bough and secured below.

I now cut the bark near the root, loosened it at the sides, and lowered it to the ground. Then I made a slit in it at each end for about eighteen inches, and making the two pieces to overlap, I sewed them with thongs, so as to form a pointed stem and stern. The whole was then gummed over, some sticks were placed here and there across it to keep it in shape, and my canoe was ready.

On the third day the canoe was launched; then, paddle in hand, I urged it swiftly to the island, and once more found myself in my bower. Everything was in order, save an exuberant growth of boughs and creepers, which were duly cut down and consigned to the flames inside

the bower, in order that the heat and smoke might drive away vermin of every kind.

It took me almost a day to put my cabin to rights, to clear the spring and to make the approaches easy. But when the task was done, the bower proved a very agreeable and pleasant abode. My holiday had as yet been rather fatiguing, but now that my duties were over, I proceeded to lay out my plans for some amusement.

Shouldering my gun next morning, and taking Tiger with me, I began a tour of the island. This was no easy matter, as almost everywhere the trees grew close down to the banks.

During this journey I discovered that my island was rich in fruits, for not only did I find the guava, but also the pine-apple. But, perhaps, the most striking sight was the bread-fruit tree, conspicuous from its large, glossy and deeply digitated leaf.

On the whole, my tour of the little island was satisfactory, and afforded me an insight into the wealth and luxuries of my singular residence. When I returned and had supped heartily, I went to my hammock and slept the whole night.

At an early hour next morning I launched my little barque upon the smooth waters of the lake. I had with me my gun, my rod, my rude landing-net, provisions and some weak rum and water. In addition to this, I had fashioned an umbrella to protect me from the sun, for in such a climate it would have been useless as a shelter from the heavy rains.

By judicious management I took my canoe right up into the mouth of the little stream, which proved to be navigable for such a light craft. It was a deep and sluggish bayou, with sedgy banks, though I dare say it ran swiftly enough during the rainy season.

My line was very strong, and my rod a sturdy one, so that I was prepared for any strong fish likely to be taken in that spot. My bait ready, I was not long at work before the bottom of my canoe was covered with fish. Wearying of such easy sport, I went slowly up the stream, wafted by a gentle breeze, which turned my umbrella into a sail

Then my heart sank within me, and I was horrified by a most unearthly cry—a cry that seemed to curdle the blood in my veins and paralyse my every energy. It was a cry I knew not. What was to be done? It had arisen at no great distance from me and in the direction of my stable.

My first idea was that a lion had attacked my cattle; but then, neither horse nor zebra could have uttered such a long melancholy wail. I pushed my canoe in shore, and fastening it to a tree I landed. Then, clutching my gun, I crept under the trees, just as the horrid wail up rose once more—this time followed by a series of fearful shrieks in another voice, and that the voice of a woman.

What thoughts filled my soul it would not be easy for me to say; but I at once came to the conclusion that it was my Indian girl! I was in such a frenzied state of mind that I rushed on almost heedless of the consequences.

Nothing could be heard but my own panting breath, when suddenly a whirr and a rush took place, and my horse, zebra and dog scampered past without taking any notice of me.

I halted; for I heard the fearful scream again, and now it was close to me. I clenched my teeth, and stooping low, I saw at the foot of a tree a young girl, very good looking, and apparently gentle by nature. She was dead! She had been tied to the tree and tortured to death. It is a hideous punishment performed by beings in the shape of men on females suspected of being witches, or of having caused the evil eye to fall upon any one.

They had fastened her to the trunk and lacerated her flesh all over the body, and in these cuts they rubbed red pepper, in order to render the torture more horrible. But who had done all this? and where were the fiendish monsters?

I peered round, fearing every moment that they would attack me; and as I knew I could be of no service to the unfortunate girl, I resolved to escape to my island as

quickly as possible, and there devise as to my plans for the future. To creep back to the river, enter my boat and glide noiselessly down the stream, was the work of a very few minutes.

Terror lent me wings, nor did I stop until I was safely landed on the small island. That my home was invaded, that a large party of savage and ruthless natives had either made it a battle-field or a hunting ground, was certain. The desolate thoughts which filled my mind can scarcely find vent in words.

Still there was nothing for it but to lie close and watch—at all events until night, when I might contrive to elude the vigilance of the wretches, and return with Tiger to my fort, where I determined to make one last stand for life and liberty. Indeed, death was far preferable to falling into their hands.

I ate whatever I could lay my hands on, muzzled my dog, loaded my double-barrel with ball, and watched. My island was only accessible from two quarters—one was from the river which supplied the lake with water, the other from the landing-place whence I always started on my journeys.

There was a sudden hush of all nature as the sun went down and was at once replaced by the silvery moon; but every now and then a dark cloud would speed over its disk and leave all nature in a deeper gloom. It was during one of these moments that I suddenly caught sight of a small fire under the leafy arches of the forest close to my stable. Then it blazed up on high, and I could see dusky figures piling on wood.

Before five minutes had elapsed, I saw that these reckless savages were about to destroy my stable. I could scarcely refrain from slaying two of them at once. But my powder was valuable, and besides, it would have been madness in me to have disclosed my retreat.

As soon as the fire was fairly made, and the green walls of my stable began to burn, the savages stepped back to view their handiwork. They were the same horrible Fan Indians who have been before described in an early part of my narrative. They were tall and powerful men.

But one in particular attracted my notice, by the ferocity of his appearance and the "bravery" of his ornamentation. His body was painted red. He had a huge shield of elephant's hide, and held in his hand a bundle of three or four spears, with a bag of what were probably poisoned arrows. He was giving orders. At last I saw him point to my little island. Half a dozen warriors were immediately detached from the group. They advanced to the landing with torches in their hands, and examined the ground carefully.

Then, with a shout, they pointed to my footsteps, and to the mark left by the boat on the bank of the river. They had found my trail.

I knew that there was very little hope for me. I could fight as long as my powder lasted, but that would only be for a little time; while at every shot the fear of fire-arms would become less in the minds of these warriors, who were evidently used to fighting, and were no doubt very brave and expert.

They now dispersed, and each man appeared to be making for himself a raft of reeds. In ten minutes more, six grim and terrible-looking fellows had embarked, armed with javelin, cross-bow and shield. I had my double-barelled gun, my flask of powder, twenty or thirty bullets, my pistols, a knife and a heavy sharp axe.

The other warriors stood around in groups and waited.

The rafts were all close together, and came slowly on, being paddled with small pieces of broken branches.

They were about two pistol-shots off when I took aim. They were evidently certain that I was on the island, and expected to catch me asleep. I took deliberate aim, my very heart in my mouth. I saw nothing but a dark and frightful mass, for the fire on shore made the lake pitchy black.

I fired, and as the echoes of my gun woke up the forest, I gave them a second barrel. It was like magic. When the smoke passed from before my eyes, the rafts were empty, and floating slowly towards the waterfall. There were four heads in the water. The other two had sunk,

The four who had escaped were swimming hard for the shore, though I could see one was lagging behind, being no doubt wounded. I again loaded, putting two balls in this time without any extra charge of powder. Then I waited.

Three of the fugitives were soon upon the shore, where a great cry was heard, probably at the news that two had been killed. Then they ran to and fro, while one or two rushed into the water to assist the last man. But it was too late, his strength was gone; and in a few minutes more three dark bodies moved slowly past me, drawn on by the remorseless current.

For some time I was left in peace, the whole of the party retreating into the woods. I was at first inclined to think that they had had enough of the combat, but I was soon undeceived. In about half an hour the whole gang reappeared, headed by their chief.

He alone did not carry a burthen, though all the others carried trees and branches, with which to make a commodious raft. For so many, nothing was easier than to construct one that would convey a dozen. In half-an-hour, a large and secure but very unwieldy raft was in the water, and at the end of it next to my island they placed a rampart of bushes, grass, and turf rudely torn from the ground. Then the warriors, some ten or a dozen in number, lay down on the raft, the oarsmen kneeling. To shoot through the rampart was quite out of the question, it was so thick and high.

Peering out into the darkness, I saw that there were four or five savages swimming in the water, and keeping the raft in the right direction. Now my pistols were very good, and seeing a great black savage rise in the water, I fired.

With a cry, which was re-echoed by a dozen others, he let go his hold and sank. I had hit him in the head. Again I fired, and another fell. Then taking aim at one of the oarsmen with my gun, I fired, and the oar falling out of his hand, the raft broached to, and, turning round, the whole party of warriors came in view. With a fearful yell they leaped into the water. Once again my gun sent forth its volley of flame, and then I fled.

Gliding along the shore, I soon came to where my canoe lay in the dark shadow of some cedars; I could see the savages making a rush, despite the mischief I had done. In a few minutes they would be on my trail. I pushed the boat off, and the overhanging boughs mainly assisting me, I pulled it along without the use of oars. In this way I soon reached the end of the island, when pushing my boat under some overhanging trees, I loaded my gun and listened.

The savages were on the island, searching for me everywhere. I could hear them tearing through the bushes, striking right and left with their clubs, in the hope of thus finding me. Tiger, who stuck close to me, gave a savage growl, which warned me to be off; so, sitting firmly in my canoe, I struck out for the opposite shore, taking every precaution to avoid the influence of the current.

Fear lends strength, I do believe; for the canoe flew beneath the vigorous strokes of my paddles, and in a few minutes I was across the lake and under shelter of the trees which skirted its borders.

The bark canoe was fastened to the boughs which swept the water's edge, and then creeping into the arches of the gloomy forest, I preferred trusting to all the chances of wild beasts, boa-constrictors, pythons and all the other species of the family of snakes, to running the risk of falling into the hands of cannibals.

For some time I continued on my way in impenetrable darkness, until at length a small clearing opened before me, and I saw that I had come upon a village of monkeys. Every tree had a nest—that is, a rude platform and a slanting roof of thatch. Tired, wearied and scarcely knowing what to do, I climbed into the most handy of these, and curling myself round very much like the animal that erected it, I fell asleep.

When I awoke it was long past daylight, but nothing was in sight. My large dog sleeping at the bottom of the tree, had probably kept the monkey away. However this may be, I glided to the ground, and hurried on my way.

I soon reached the stream that supplied the lake, and contrived to cross it by means of a log which lay upon the bank. I then struck out for the track that led to my cave. Once there I considered that I should be a match for a hundred or two, even of such Indians as the Fans.

My dog, which I had again muzzled, suddenly stood still and whined.

I brought my gun to the charge, but at once saw that it was too late. Fifty warriors were upon me, and the death of one or two would only have exasperated the rest. However, I made a feint of running, cast my gun into a thicket, and then facing about, met the howling, yelling, shrieking troop of savages with a firm, undaunted look.

It required all my nerve to do so, but though I had little hope, it was, at all events, satisfactory to show them how a white man can die. They were lighter in shade, stronger, taller and more active than any purely negro race; they were naked, with the exception of a wild-cat apron, while their teeth were filed, which gave their face a ghastly and ferocious look, especially those who had their teeth blackened. Their hair or wool was drawn out in long thin plaits, while on the end of each stiff plait were strung some white beads and copper or iron rings.

They clutched me with a yell of triumph, and at once tied me to a tree; after which they retired to a distance and sat down in a circle. My feelings may be imagined. I knew my fate. The image of the poor Indian girl was before me; but then she was one of their own tribe. I was not—they would certainly eat me.

Besides, had I not killed their warriors, laid desolate some of their homes, and in their eyes deserved death? I knew it was coming, for they began to sing a mournful heart-piercing chant, which seemed to say, "There is no hope!"—something which sounded like, *We che noli labella pe na beshe!* Then up they leaped, brandishing their spears, hatchets, shields and war-clubs.

Four rushed at me, and I knew that my hour was come. They halted in front of me, their countenances

exhibiting the utmost distortion. But I knew that I looked them full in the face with a most undaunted expression, which seemed to exasperate them awfully; for one raised his lance, one his club, another his poisoned arrow, just as I muttered a hasty prayer for mercy—not to them, but to Him who alone could save me in that strait.

What is that cry? It must be madness even to think of it—and yet it seemed clear and distinct.

CHAPTER LIX.

OVERWHELMING ADVENTURES.

MY utter and overwhelming astonishment may be conceived, when on coming to myself I found hanging over me three Europeans, as I at once recognised them to be despite their sunburnt looks and strange costume.

"It is—can it be?" said a voice, which sounded like a dim echo of the past. "It is—my boy." And I was clasped in the arms of my dear father.

"This here is no time for speechifying," said a gruff voice. "I wants to know, master, if there is any place which we could hold against these rampagious savages? They're taken aback just now; but my name is not John Thomas if they'll not be on us again in a minute."

I rose to my feet, the circulation having by this time returned, and well aware of the exposed position in which we were, I took upon myself to lead the way. I managed, however, to take them in a direction that admitted of my recovering my gun, which I took up without remark. Indeed, I was so overwhelmed that I could not speak. The miracle which had been performed in my favour was so astounding that I could scarcely credit my senses.

One moment before, and the savages were about to immolate me without mercy; now I was a free man, with my father, uncle James and the skipper John Thomas. It seemed scarcely possible, and yet it was so.

Yes. My hand was held in that of my beloved parent as we hurried along without a word, the gallant captain bringing up the rear and keeping a good look-out.

He was right when he roused us to a sense of our situation, for we had not gone a quarter of a mile when we saw the savages hanging like a cloud upon our rear and preparing to attack us. With their spears, clubs and almost impenetrable shields, our fire-arms which they now began thoroughly to understand, were not so formidable as they had at first imagined. As we were determined not to be circumvented, we retreated in good order, keeping our guns ready. Savages do not all at once get over such a surprise as we had given them, so that for a time the mere pointing of our guns sufficed to send them back in full and precipitous retreat.

Then came a rushing sound through the wood, and both horse and zebra came galloping up, accompanied by all the dogs. They had doubtless been attracted by the firing, and their curious instinct made them understand that with us they would be safe against the savages who had pursued them with such relentless fury. I immediately caught them, and we mounted, two on each, and though the burden was heavy we were soon out of sight of our furious and discomfited pursuers.

When we reached my cave and passed into the fort, the delight and admiration of my friends knew no bounds. My artillery, my pond, my cave, my stockade, were all examined and applauded in turn; but I checked all this to talk of other things.

"My mother—my sister—my cousin?"

"All well," said my father quickly; "but of that when we have leisure. Let us now think only of our safety."

"Right you are!" cried old John Thomas, a grizzled seaman of three-score: "and first as to the larder."

All the dogs having followed us, two of the most yelping curs were tied at the end of the pathway to give notice, while I led my delighted friends into my cave and gave them a hearty meal. My heart was very full all this time, and as I beheld them, I could not re-

strain myself from grasping their hands, and by looks manifesting my extreme delight.

But our danger rendered it absolutely necessary that we should prepare for our defence. No sooner, therefore, was the meal concluded, than we all sallied forth and examined the state of our fortress. Everything was pronounced admirable, except that in case of a rush it was deemed advisable to leave the gate open, only fixing some bars across, so as not to impede the devastating power of my infernal machine, which was loaded and primed afresh. The dogs were now called in and fastened within the cave, lest their barking should attract the savages.

Then with a goodly supply of powder and ball, and with such arms as I could provide, my unexpected and beloved allies took up their posts. It was arranged that at the first rush of the savages I should fire my infernal machine, and then one of the others would slam the gate and fasten the thick bar; when each would act according to circumstances.

I now climbed up by means of my ladder, and crept from bough to bough, until I came to a spot where I could overlook the plain. There was no chance of our escaping their attack, as the trail we had left was broad and obvious; all we could hope for would be fair warning.

For about an hour an awful stillness prevailed, when as I had expected, I saw the savages emerge from the wood in small parties on the trail. As soon as they saw that the track led to a dense thicket they halted, while I eagerly returned to my position within the fort, making signs, as I descended the ladder, that the blacks were coming.

I crouched beneath the shed which covered my guns. They were loaded, with the pans open and a train of gunpowder communicating with them all. As they were tried muskets, I had put several balls in each. I myself was hidden behind some planks, which had, however, chinks in them, through which I could observe all that was passing. In my hand was a lighted piece of touchwood, in my belt two pistols, and by my side my double-barrelled gun.

Suddenly I heard a suspicious cracking of dry boughs in the pathway, and in an instant I saw a whole mob of curious faces peering through the open gateway of the fort.

Loud was the report, fearful the yells, and dire the destruction, as my train flashed on high, and the guns went off. In an instant, slam went the high gate—the bar was placed across, and my friends were ready; but they said not a word.

From the terrible groans of anguish, I knew that the destruction caused by my artillery was very great; but our position was too perilous to take this into consideration, so I reloaded my infernal machine, and summoned the whole party to a conference, under the shelter of my palm-trees. I expressed my opinion that there would be no attack for some time, and that it would be advisable for as many as possible to take some rest.

“But we must have a sentry,” said Captain Thomas.

“I will keep guard,” was my reply.

“No, my boy. I am an old sailor and used to keeping my eyes open. Snatch a little sleep, and I will awake you all at the least noise.”

I yielded reluctantly, not wishing to prolong the discussion, as my father and uncle, despite the danger and excitement, were sinking with fatigue. I led them inside my cave, gave them a cordial, and then, after a hearty embrace, they fell fast asleep.

As for myself, I was glad to be alone with my own thoughts. The events of the last twenty-four hours had been so bewildering, that my mind was in a terrible whirl. I knew not what to think. My capture by the savages, my narrow escape from death, my wondrous rescue by those whom I had little reason to think were still in the land of the living, surpassed anything that had happened to me during the five years that had elapsed since my wreck.

For a long time I could not sleep; at last, however, wearied nature overcame every other consideration, and I became insensible to all around for hours.

When I awoke, it was black and dark without. I

crept into the open air, and found the grizzled old seaman at his watch. Nothing had occurred all night to startle him, while even the groans of the wounded were no longer to be heard.

"Why, my dear Alfred," said the grim old sailor, "you beat Robinson Crusoe. This is indeed a most wonderful island."

I could not help smiling; and after giving him certain directions, I was about to depart, when we heard a strange noise outside the gate; the dogs rushed forth with a yell, and began scratching underneath it. Climbing up my ladder with stealthy steps, I peered down through the leaves.

A number of lads and women were removing the dead.

I had a great mind to fire, for I suspected the horrid purpose for which they were being taken. Then I recollected that no tribe eats its own dead. The Fans buy the dead of the Oshebas, who in turn buy theirs. They also buy the dead of other families in their own tribes, and besides this, they get the bodies of a great many slaves from the Mbichos and Mbondemos, for which they readily give ivory at the rate of a small tusk for a body.

But another consideration restrained me, which was, that the removal of the bodies in such hot weather was necessary from sanitary considerations.

I descended the ladder, and communicated my information to the skipper; after which I passed through my cave, drove back all my dogs except Tiger, and closing my door behind me, I crept through the serpent cavern and soon emerged into the open air. There was now a faint tint of dawn creeping slowly along the eastern horizon.

Having reached the summit of the rocks, a walk of a few hundred yards brought me to a spot which overlooked the plain, and there I saw that the Fans had collected a perfect army in numbers, which it was almost impossible for us successfully to oppose. I used my telescope, and saw that they had piled in a heap more than a dozen dead bodies, and were preparing to go through some ceremony.

They were about to dance to the music of a monotonous little drum, which is their favourite instrument. It was soon over, but while it lasted it was a wild and horrible scene to behold some ten hundred nearly naked savages whirling their limbs about in all sorts of hideous contortions.

When this ceased, the women approached and offered them food, which they ate eagerly, though I fancied they cast eager glances at the pile of human flesh.

No sooner was the morning meal consumed than they rose, clutched their cross-bows, lances, clubs and spears, and advanced to the assault, this time with a fierce determination that boded us no good. They were soon about two hundred feet from me, and five hundred from the gate of the fortress. With a desire to alarm the garrison, and without regard to consequences, I levelled, took careful aim at a tall chief, and fired. I saw that he bit the dust; and then, expecting a grand onslaught, I took to my heels.

When I gained the cavern I found all up and ready. Their sleep had refreshed them much, and when a hasty breakfast had been handed round, they came forth with new vigour.

Still no attack was made.

I have already explained that when I planted the dense thicket, which was, as it were, the wall of my fortress, I left the trees which were there before, only cutting down for fuel any that came near the outer part of the wall. I now proposed that three of us should climb into the branches and surprise the savages by a volley from the summit of the trees.

This was agreed to, Captain John Thomas remaining near his broadside, for which he had a considerable predilection. The others, guided by me, ascended the ladder, and then climbed from bough to bough until we were on the edge of the wall.

The Fans were gloomy and advancing slowly in great force, though I remarked that about a dozen of their slimmest warriors or runners had turned back, and were evidently about to cross the ravine in search of an explanation of the shot from the rocks.

This gave me a terrible shock, as they were likely to discover the shaft-like entrance to my cave; in which case we were lost.

The savages carried their huge elephant-shields in such a way as to protect their bodies. But what puzzled me was this: the front of the column was composed of about a dozen men, who had fastened one great shield above the others in such a way as to descend to their very feet, while those behind appeared to be carrying bundles.

Bundles! Yes: they were about to attack my fortification by fire. They had collected masses of reeds, bamboos and dry wood to burn us out.

As soon as the column was near enough, we held whispered counsel and took aim, each taking care to select a different man. We fired at their heads, and they dropped either dead or mortally wounded.

Then the whole body, without caring for their companions, made a desperate rush at the walls and cast down their bundles of faggots at the foot of the dense thicket. Again we fired with deadly effect, and then retreated to the inside of the fort, to wait the course of events.

As soon as we were all together in a sheltered corner of the hut, we began to devise as to the best plan of acting under the circumstances. That the savages would burn us out was very probable, as the quantity of fuel they could bring to bear on the fort was immense.

My advice was, to take my infernal machine bodily on its frame into the very depths of my cave, which I thought we could defend against any number of enemies. My friends had a tolerable supply of powder, while I had enough to last all our guns for a week. They readily acquiesced; but upon examination of the interior, the old sailor suggested that my battery should be fixed in the doorway of the upper cave, which would then be to all intents and purposes impregnable.

I thought this was a very good suggestion, as it would sweep the outer cave and be a serious check to the infuriated invaders of my home.

A good supply of provisions was moved to my inner cave; also a thick deal box, the contents of which I had formerly scorned as useless.

This done, the infernal machine was fixed on its frame in such a way as not to impede our exit or entrance. We then sallied forth to watch the progress of events. It was a very sultry, hot day, and we could hear in the distance the rolling of the thunder portending a storm.

Scarcely had we taken shelter from the scorching rays of the sun, when my dogs began to bark furiously, sticking up their noses in the air, and jumping in the wildest and strangest manner. As it behoved us to be very careful and watchful, we broke off a low whispered conversation, and looked up.

My heart beat wildly when I observed the infernal cunning and perseverance of these warriors. About half-a-dozen of them had crossed the rocks, followed the ridge until they had made out the region above my cave, and were now clambering into the tops of the palm trees. Only one of these, however, could be reached from the rocks, but that one gained, it would be easy to get to the next.

The savages had evidently no intention of adopting this means of attack, for these were picked young men, who probably intended to show the great body of warriors what desperate deeds of valour they were capable of. No sooner, therefore, was the first warrior on the tree, than, looking down, he began to descend. I whispered the state of things to my friends, and gave directions how to act.

We first cautiously moved the branches aside and took aim, by previous agreement first allowing four to get up on the tree. With a whispered signal, we fired—all at once. A fearful fall and the furious barking of our dogs was all we could make out. Then the smoke cleared away, and on the ground we saw one warrior being torn to pieces by the dogs. But our eyes were then, by one accord, cast upwards, and we saw the three wounded, bleeding wretches using frantic efforts to re-ascend the tree.

At this moment a fearful crackling and the rising of a dense column of smoke, informed us that the main body had succeeded in setting fire to their faggots. This decided our course of action. Without waiting to see the result of the fearful struggle above, we returned and ensconced ourselves in the inner cave, where even in a hand-to-hand fight we should stand a very fair chance.

Now began one of those long and wearisome waitings that make the heart sink. We knew that the action by fire must be a slow process, but, at the same time, it was dreadful to be compelled to remain so long inactive, and unaware of their proceedings, while the labour and care of so many years were being destroyed.

We could hear the cries and groans of those who had fallen from above, until at length our dogs came rushing in, as if unable any longer to endure the heat. We made them pass within the inner cave, where there was a magnificent spring of delicious water.

We sat round the entrance of my inner cave, with our weapons close at hand, and talked much of the adventures which had befallen us during our separation, occasionally taking some refreshment, while the skipper indulged in a smoke. And thus another day wore away and night came on.

They all slept except myself, but I did not feel any inclination to slumber, for I was too much excited by certain revelations which had been made to me during our conversation. For a long time I kept my eyes fixed upon the entrance to the cave, which, after having been some time lit up by the lurid flames, was now gradually relapsing into darkness.

Suddenly I heard strange noises in the outer cave; so, without taking the trouble to wake my companions, I fired.

The cavern was full of Fans. They were everywhere. They were groping about in the dark in my kitchen, bedroom and store-room. When, however, my gun exploded with a terrible report, they made a furious rush towards me. But my companions were ready; they fired the battery, and then single guns.

"Keep them at bay a moment," I said, "and then do as I do."

I had lighted a taper in a corner, and had opened the mysterious box to which I have already alluded. From this I took a bundle of rockets, and when my friends and I had each discharged one of these, I followed up with such a shower of catherine-wheels, dragons and similar fireworks, as turned the cave into a very furnace.

Sparks, flames and an awful odour of sulphur, added to the terrible nature of this cannonade, which having continued for five minutes, we stopped; then retreating into the inner cave some distance, we lay down to allow the smoke to pass over our heads. This took some considerable time; after which, quite satisfied to trust to our dogs, we remained still and slept until morning.

On examination, my cave proved to be in a dreadful state. There were nine dead bodies, not all killed by our guns, but some by heavy pieces of stone which had fallen from the roof. The disorder was perfectly fearful.

At length we ventured out to see if the savages had really gone. We were well armed and used every precaution. We threw ourselves out in something like skirmishing order, keeping, however, in sight of one another, creeping behind bushes—crawling at times—but not a trace of the savages was to be seen. It was fortunate for me that I had preserved this box, which at one time appeared so useless, for the explosion of the fireworks had terrified the savages far more than the discharge of guns, as they now began faintly to understand them.

It was some time, however, before we became convinced that we were safe; indeed, we were not fully satisfied of it until we reached the heights and saw the Indians in full retreat towards the continent, urging their canoes through the water at a rate which plainly indicated the terror with which they had been smitten.

Still, the discovery of my retreat by these warlike savages, was something to fill us with perpetual alarm, for having once recovered from their present abject terror, they might take heart and return in such overwhelming numbers as utterly to destroy us, and render any attempt at defence useless.

CHAPTER LX.

OUR NEW ESTABLISHMENT.

A COUNCIL of war was now held. It had been already agreed that the whole colony which had been left on the mainland should be transported to my island, and well housed; while an effort was to be made to build such a ship as would enable us to reach a point on the African coast frequented by trading vessels, one of which would certainly give us a passage home.

As the building of such a vessel would, however, be a work of time, it behoved us to be prepared to spend at least another year on the island. Such are human calculations! But the first consideration was to provide food for so great an addition to the colony. To me this offered no great difficulty; and to convince my companions of it, I proposed a survey of my island, to which they readily agreed. My zebra and horse, both of which excited their unbounded admiration, were now caught, and loaded with the necessary provisions for our journey.

It was, indeed, a change from my solitary state to find myself at the head of a cavalcade composed of three men, two horses and a drove of dogs. My delight may be imagined but not described, as I pointed out all the different scenes of my mishaps and misfortunes, as well as those of my many mercies and happinesses.

Nor did I forget to tell my father how much I had benefited by the education he had given me, and how his early lessons of wisdom and courage had served me in my perilous straits, from the time when I was cast away on a bleak coast—my whole riches, a knife and an oyster shell—until now, when I had my flocks and herds, and all else that man could need here below.

My plantation first engaged their attention, and seemed to them very wonderful, until they recollected the latitude in which we were, and the extraordinary fertility of the climate and soil.

My piggery, however, astonished, delighted and amazed them, especially as the pigs were very lean and savage.

Their rapid increase had begun to make food scarce, so we at once set to work to thin them, selecting the largest and fattest, which we concealed in a deep and secluded thicket, to be salted on our return the next day.

But I must confess that my heart beat with considerable emotion at the prospect of showing my friends the valley of the gazelles, and I determined that it should prove to them a perfect dramatic hit. These animals, as well as the ostriches, had been driven to crater valley before the incursion of the Fans, so that when we came to the end of the first valley, I called a halt under a grove of palms, where I proposed that we should dine.

I then left them, and taking with me only my shepherd dogs I strolled away towards the partition which I had made in the feeding grounds of my animals; and in ten minutes more my extraordinary flock of gazelles and ostriches were bounding joyously into the fresh fields and pastures new, with which they were evidently delighted.

"My dear boy," cried my father, shaking me by the hand, "what perseverance, what courage, and what foresight you have displayed!"

"I have been miserable and despondent enough, dear father," I replied; "but heaven at last sent me resignation, and believing that my fate was inseparably connected with this solitary island, I determined to submit, and to create for myself as many companions and as much occupation as possible."

"A good resolve, my son. Labour after all is the only cure for mental suffering."

We sat down to dinner, and while discussing that meal I recapitulated some of my more remarkable adventures.

After dinner I proposed that we should leave the animals and provisions here, where I intended to pass the night, and that we should spend the afternoon in exploring the neighbouring country in search of a spot where we might find both a dockyard and timber at hand to commence our vessel. This being agreed to, the

horses were hobbled, all the dogs except Tiger were tied up, and away we started in a northerly direction.

My friends were well satisfied with my cave in the rock as a retreat in the hour of danger, but it was manifestly unsuitable as a residence for so many people. One of our objects, therefore, was to select a site where a village could be erected on a spot both fertile and capable of defence.

My own opinion was in favour of a place near the jungle of bamboos, which had formerly been of such great service to me ; and in this direction I led the way.

The bamboos grew over a considerable space, perhaps a mile in length, and about two hundred yards wide. Behind this there was a running stream, which, being impeded in its course by rocks, had overflowed its banks to a considerable distance. On the other side of the river were some gigantic trees, the largest I had ever seen. Not a sign of brushwood was visible, but a green grassy turf rose in a gentle slope from the river.

"This is the spot," I cried, "and here we may erect our village. Here we shall find both a place for launching our barque, and plenty of wood to build it."

"Yes, Alfred," cried my father, "it is indeed a beautiful spot, and I could willingly pass the rest of my days on your marvellous island."

The first important consideration, with a view to the transportation of many things needful to our new establishment, was the construction of some kind of vehicle that would carry a good load, and which, drawn by our two steeds, would assist us so much.

I should gladly have crossed to the main land at once, and brought over all our friends, but my father wished first to make such arrangements as would secure their comfort on their arrival. Time pressed, however, and it was desirable to have everything ready before the wet season should set in and interrupt our labours.

My heart was very much against this resolution ; but older and wiser heads than mine thinking it prudent, I yielded, and determined to urge on our preparations as much as possible, and thus hasten the time of our meeting.

We resolved to use the cave only as a retreat in case of danger, as a last redoubt when driven from our intrenchments by an overwhelming force of savages. The chief objections made to it as a residence, even in the winter or rainy season, were the confined space, the darkness and other discomforts always attendant on a cavern dwelling. But to me it appeared like leaving home; still, as I knew my friends were right, I made no objection.

Besides, I knew that a small town, such as that which we were about to erect, would be more healthy, pleasant and cheerful.

The plan we adopted for a sledge was to cut down two trees with trunks of a sufficient size to make the sides, with a curve in front to facilitate its transit over grass, shrubs and other obstructions. Then across these we laid several pieces of wood, and fastened them securely by means of fibre-cord and nails.

The harness was of the simplest kind, but strong enough to bear any weight we should require. In the first place, there were tools to be removed to the new station, then such things as could be spared from the cave without exactly stripping it altogether and making it uninhabitable.

As soon as some other little matters had been attended to, such as preparing and salting provisions, the whole colony started on their journey, armed to the teeth and accompanied by the dogs.

First marched myself and Tiger, as guides. My father came behind me, ready at any moment to assist in clearing the way for the sledge.

But though our vehicle was not overloaded, and though we gave every needful assistance to the animals, yet we did not reach the river until night; so that we were once more compelled to encamp.

After breakfast the next day, our first duty was to make a bridge, which we did in the following manner. Having cut down half-a-dozen trees, we laid them across a narrow part of the stream. Over these we first placed a number of boughs, and then covered the whole with a

coating of grass and earth mixed together, which made an excellent roadway ; we then crossed in great triumph, the sledge and horses doing admirably.

We had now reached the terrestrial paradise which had before attracted our attention ; and as I have already remarked, the turf was smooth and without undergrowth, so that our journey became both easy and pleasant, and we soon reached a spot which at once struck my father as suitable for our purpose.

Several of the gigantic trees already alluded to, grew a considerable distance from one another on the slope of a small plain, skirted by a deep but narrow stream. Selecting four of these trees, we erected around each, what my father called a "tent house," which had the advantage of being easily built, and was at the same time commodious and elegant.

The outside being finished, each building was divided into four distinct dwellings, each of which had a separate outside door, as well as one inside, by which to communicate in bad weather. The erection of these four elaborate dwelling-places, well built and plastered on the inside with a kind of mud, occupied us about three weeks, and we calculated that they would suffice to lodge the whole party in comfort.

A little way off we built a log-hut for a common kitchen, as fire could not often be endured in these latitudes. Then there was a store-room, also built of logs, which we made very strong and secure, so that we could fly to it as a fort in case of attack, and thus concentrate all our forces.

It was nearly six weeks ere we concluded these preparations ; nor had we touched the stockade with which we intended to surround the dwellings. That, however, was a matter almost beyond our strength, and required the assistance of those dear ones for whom we had been labouring so hard. We determined, therefore, to adjourn that undertaking until their arrival.

But to furnish our huts, however rudely, and to stock them with provisions that were not perishable, was a necessary task, and we performed it with that resolution

which all appeared to have acquired, from the habit of shifting for ourselves. Then another delay occurred. The season being unusually hot, we were obliged to take in all our corn and vegetables, and then to turn up the ground for more. No sooner, however, had we sown the seeds, than we were surprised by a regular equinoctial gale, which threatened to shut us up in our huts for an early season.

This was very unpleasant, but there was no help for it ; so we entered into possession of the largest and best of the huts, and there devoted our time to the manufacture of tables, chairs and such other articles of furniture as came within the reach of our mechanical genius. This kind of labour lightened our vexation and cheered our days ; but in the evening, confined as we were, time would have been tedious indeed, if we had not found a pleasant way of beguiling it.

My father, at my earnest request, began the story of his adventures and those of the family, since I had been separated from them nearly six years before. My uncle and the skipper knew it all, of course ; but my discovery of tobacco was to them delightful in the extreme, and enabled them not only to endure the narration, but to enjoy it.

For myself, those evenings were entrancing, more so than any of them could understand at that time.

CHAPTER LXI

THE ADVENTURES OF MY FAMILY.

WHEN I made my desperate leap from the wreck, it was the belief of all that I had sunk to rise no more ; and though they made frantic efforts to reach the ship again, the wind and waves were too much for them. At last those in the boat resolved that to remain by the wreck was madness ; and putting the helm up, they let her go before the wind.

The shore of the island upon which the vessel had struck was so bleak and arid, that none cared even to

attempt a landing, but went right before the wind towards the continent, which the skipper firmly believed to be at no great distance. While endeavouring to take me off, they lost sight of the yawl, and never saw it again.

The wind had now much abated, so that by baling and careful steering, they were able to keep from sinking, until towards evening they espied a dark mass in the distance, which, on nearer approach, appeared to be a pile of rocks, against which the waves dashed angrily.

The landing-place was difficult of access, but one of the negroes who was a bit of a sailor undertook to steer the boat under the direction of the captain, who advised every one to look out, as it was most likely that the boat would be upset, a sorrowful prospect for my mother and younger brothers and sisters. Every preparation was made to guard against this contingency, but the rollers were too much for them, and though the negroes leaped out to lighten the boat, it no sooner touched than over it went, without, however, any injury being done, thanks to the agility and energy of the blacks.

In deep darkness, on a bleak and arid shore, with a northerly wind blowing, they suffered the same miseries as had at first made my own existence unendurable. They had provisions but no water, that having been lost in the staving-in of the boat. After some search they found a small rock, which sheltered them from the extreme severity of the blast; and behind it, huddled together for warmth with the children in their midst, they passed the weary night. Two of my sisters were nearly women, but the other two were much younger, while my brothers were mere children.

Nor did day bring them any sensible relief. They were in a land-locked bay, without any apparent means of ascending to the summit of the cliffs, while nothing could be seen, save a thicket of very poor trees and a few mussels and cockles clinging to the rocks, which were eagerly taken off and devoured.

It was then resolved that my father, my uncle and the four blacks, with a youth named Andrew Gordon, who

had been a midshipman on board, should form a party to explore; and that the wounded captain should remain with the women and children.

The explorers started at an early hour, my father taking command of the party; and after a few unimportant incidents, they arrived about noon at the very bay where, nearly six years afterwards, I found Pablina's broken canoe. They soon discovered the cavern leading to the interior of the country, and passing through it rapidly, to their great delight they saw before them a beautiful lake studded with islands. The aspect of the valley and lake with its many islands was grateful in the extreme, for the distant volcano was not then burning.

While my father and uncle remained to explore the lake, and seek a place on its shores where something like an awning of leaves and boughs might be erected to protect them from the night air, the others hurried back to assist the women and young children through the cavern.

They passed but an indifferent night in such poor shelter, and next morning it was resolved that they should erect huts on the islands, which contained trees and bushes suitable for the purpose; the islands being close to one another were easily reached by bridges.

Before proceeding to work, however, my father, my uncle and the captain, held a serious consultation; the result of which they communicated to my mother, who, though startled at first, soon came round to their opinion. The blacks were then all summoned into their presence, and were thus addressed by my uncle:—

“You have all been in my family for many years as faithful and attached servants. In Virginia you were my household property, left to me by my forefathers; but misfortune levels all distinctions. Here you are free, and free you shall remain should fortune ever enable us to escape from this place; but should you desire to remain in my service when we return to Virginia, as I hope we shall, I solemnly promise that each of you shall have enough money and land to start in life with a fair prospect of success.

"Now there is another point upon which I am anxious to satisfy you. You are all young, and, I dare say, have your affections, your likes and dislikes: I believe that in a well-ordered community, however small, the sooner matrimony is introduced the better. It is my wish, therefore, that you all choose partners, and I, as a magistrate, will at once marry you."

A Homeric shout of laughter from the men, followed by conscious and downcast looks from the women, succeeded to this speech; and in another instant Peter stood hand-in-hand with Hagar, Jack with Bella, London with Sarah, while Cræsus took Venus, nothing loth; and thus they presented themselves before their master, who, with appropriate words performed the ceremony.

"That is a great load off my mind," said my uncle, as the loving couples moved away. "A great source of dissension is now removed."

And he was right. The negroes and their wives were from that hour the most faithful and obedient of servants.

The black men were now set to work to prepare materials for huts, while the three white men, leaving Captain Thomas at home, determined to explore the island in search of food, of which everybody stood pressing in need. They now felt the want of firearms, for there were many birds flying about, which would have been a very welcome addition to turtle and edible birds' nests, both very insipid eating unless carefully cooked.

The negroes, however, soon found a remedy for this monotony of diet. The lake was full of fish, which they set to work to catch in a very original manner, though they had neither hooks nor nets. In a very short space of time they divided off a shallow part of the lake with wattled stakes, leaving here and there narrow entrances. Here they fastened a number of supple boughs in such a way as to form a kind of basket, wide at one end and narrow at the other.

This done, they stood watching, and when they saw a shoal, they plunged into the water with long sticks in their hands, and drove the terrified fish through the baskets into the enclosure; then the narrow end of the

baskets closing as soon as they passed through, the fish had no chance of return. Those captured were of very many kinds, but one was new to all. It proved to be the armado, and was remarkable for the harsh grating noise which it made when caught by hook or line.

Armed with only a stick and a knife, the explorers now started on their expedition, with the intimation that probably they might be absent the whole night.

It was a remark made by all, that, considering the island was near the equator, it was very far from hot. This appeared to be caused by the singularly low temperature of the surrounding water, brought there at certain times of the year by the great southern polar current. Of course, as upon my island, very little rain fell except at stated seasons; but the clouds always hung low.

The consequence was, that while the lower parts of the island were sterile, the upper parts, at a height of some five hundred feet, possessed a damp climate and a tolerably luxuriant vegetation. This was more perceptible on the windward side of the island, which is the first to receive and condense moisture from the atmosphere.

They had not advanced more than two miles, when they reached a sufficient height to become aware that they were upon a volcanic island, about a third of which was covered with vegetation.

Suddenly Andrew gave a cry. His companions turned and saw two large tortoises, which must have weighed about two hundred pounds each. One of them was devouring a piece of cactus; but no sooner did the youth approach, than it lifted its head and stalked leisurely away; the second gave a shrill hiss and drew in its head.

They abound on this island and frequent, in preference, the high, damp parts, but they live also in low and arid districts. Those in the higher regions eat the leaves of various trees; while those in the lower districts feed chiefly on the cactus. The males frequently grow to a prodigious size, but the females are generally much smaller.

They are very fond of water, drink large quantities and often wallow in the mud. Those which frequent the lower districts travel long distances when thirsty; hence broad and well-beaten paths branch off in every direction from the sea coast. Many of the old *voyageurs* and buccaneers were thus able to find water when every other means had failed. When the tortoise reaches a spring it buries its head in the water above its eyes, and greedily swallows large draughts at the rate of about ten a minute. When travelling, they go on day and night, never stopping until they reach their journey's end.

Knowing that to turn a tortoise is not sufficient to secure it, as in the case of the turtle, the midshipman cut his leather belt into two strips, and when on their backs he tied them by the tail to a strong stake, and leaving them there he hastened to join his companions, who were pursuing their journey.

But I must return to the negroes and women. Each of the newly-married couples would necessarily require a cabin or hut; but with the fidelity of their race, when really attached to their masters, they first set to work to build houses or wigwams for the whites. In accordance with their own wish, the negro huts were built on an island by themselves.

One sultry day the little colony had been hard at work, when, towards evening, the women started, as they always did once or twice a week, to bathe.

There had been a hurricane blowing for some days, but the weather had now changed. Still the wind was not down; and when they descended to the beach, they found a heavy surf breaking on the shore. But by selecting a small deeply-indented inlet, they thought they might enjoy a comfortable dip.

Polly had begun to cast off her clothing, when she gave a scream and ran forward into the water. On the crest of a coming wave, into which, as an experienced swimmer, she was about to plunge, she caught sight of what at first appeared to be a huge animal, but which, on examination, proved to be part of the mast or yard of

a vessel. She fancied, however, that there was something living on it.

Polly saw it recede from her, but the next minute it came rolling forward again upon another wave, and my cousin, dashing forward, caught hold of it. But it was too much for her strength, and had not the negresses rushed to her assistance she would have been carried out by the retreating waves. By their united efforts, however, the heavy log was dragged ashore, when the alarming discovery was made that to it was lashed the apparently lifeless body of a young girl.

All bent around her; and Polly, who seemed to look upon the girl as her peculiar prize, placed her hand upon her heart, and exclaimed,

“It beats—there is life yet!”

Their first task was to carry her to the huts, wrap her in such things as they could spare, and rub her before a fire; but it was not until some turtle soup had been poured down her throat that she began to revive; for she was suffering more from exhaustion and want of food, than from exposure to the merciless waves. When her eyes had opened once or twice and she began to breathe, she was at once placed in the girls’ hut, and there nursed by Polly and Ellen.

Not a word was spoken. She was kept perfectly still, and occasionally, when she awoke, she sipped the savoury broth with which they continually supplied her.

Next day she was able to sit up; but when they began to question her, it was found that she could not understand one word they said, while her language, though musical, was unintelligible to them. How this waif from the sea had been cast upon those shores, whence she came, and who or what she was, must for a time remain a mystery.

Polly soon got a hut built for herself and the stranger, where she could, during every leisure moment, devote herself to the education of the girl, whom my father and uncle declared to be no negress, but rather of some Arab race, though, for want of a better name, they called her “The Indian Girl.”

Gentle, docile and at the same time ingenious, she was very useful. She could make snares for birds, and before she had been a month on the island she discovered a tree which, by signs, she requested the negroes to cut down. They did so, and obeying her directions, shaped it into a small canoe capable of holding one person. But I must now return to the regular order of my narrative.

CHAPTER LXII.

A WRECK ASHORE.

My father, my uncle and Andrew, as soon as they had secured their valuable prey, continued their journey. It was satisfactory to know that the island abounded with animal food; but they would not rest satisfied until they discovered some substitute for vegetables, without which it is well known that the human frame cannot exist.

After walking for half-an-hour, they reached the summit of a hill, from which they beheld scenery such as they might expect in that latitude.

For some distance the slope of the hill was stony and the soil scanty; but as they neared the bottom, where flowed a small stream, they began to discover something like tropical vegetation. Forcing their way through some bushes, they were soon on the banks of the river; on the other side of which, to their delight, they discovered a small herd of wild cattle feeding on the edge of the stream. This was so far satisfactory, but the difficulty was how to take them.

The river was in this place interrupted by a cataract formed by a mass of fallen timber, stones and earth; which enabled them to wade over, knee deep, to the opposite side. They were now in a wood with many bushes and creeping plants, which rendered their progress difficult.

While devising in their own minds what was to be done, my father, to whose teaching I owed so much of

my own happiness and comfort, was looking around him. He could not help admiring a huge thistle or cardoon that grew on the banks of the river, in many places right up to the edge of the forest. As he examined it carefully, his companions saw him smile.

"What is it?" said my uncle.

"Well, it is only a thistle or cardoon," replied my father, who was still looking up at the gigantic plant which towered a foot over his head, "but with cultivation we can make a fine vegetable of it. Botany teaches me that the cardoon and the artichoke are the same thing. Cultivated, the cardoon becomes the artichoke while, if artichokes are left to grow wild, they degenerate rapidly into the common cardoon."

"But this is a matter for the future," observed my uncle.

"Not at all. All thistles are excellent vegetables, and until we can do better they will keep off scurvy, which we have much to fear."

They now looked around in search of a fit place for an encampment. With this view, they actually cut a way with their knives through the woods, until they reached a spot where the trees became loftier, being a kind of pine, under which no undergrowth is ever to be found.

Andrew, whom I have so briefly introduced, was once a midshipman in the British navy; but being of a somewhat sullen and disagreeable temperament, he had been compelled to leave simply because his officers made the ship too hot for him. He then, as was the case with many discontented spirits, determined on emigrating to Virginia.

But this step not meeting with the approval of his friends, they had refused to assist him with money; so that he was compelled to take his passage on board our barque as second mate. In spite of his defects he was a gentleman of parts and education, and found some encouragement from the passengers in the cabin. This, however, would not have continued long if the voyage had been prosperous, his attentions to my cousin being too marked to be pleasant; but the awful trials we met

with, and the catastrophe that ensued, banished all such thoughts from our minds.

In leaving the ship, however, Andrew, instead of going in the yawl with the crew, contrived to slip into the long-boat, so as to remain with a family in which he felt so deep an interest.

Thus much by way of explanation.

While my father and uncle were looking about with great anxiety, in the hope of finding even a ground nut for their supper, Andrew had stepped aside to pick up some wood to make a fire. He had scarcely gone twenty yards, when he came back on tip-toe, with a finger on his lips, and his right hand raised in a warning attitude.

"Hist!" he said, as soon as he was near; "keep quiet, and you shall have a fine supper to-night."

They nodded assent; and then, with the utmost caution, followed him. The object he was about to exercise his skill upon was a solitary cow, which, apparently attracted by the luxuriant grass of a small clearing, had strayed from the herd and was enjoying a rich feed. The cow, which was a very plump and handsome animal, was about a dozen yards from the edge of the pine-grove, with its tail turned towards them, and its head to the wind, which came directly from it to them. Both my uncle and my father, the moment they discovered Andrew's object, concealed themselves behind a tree.

The young man acted with great deliberation and courage.

Andrew stretched himself at full length upon the ground, so as to be concealed by the high grass, which reached almost to the back of the cow. Then with his sharp knife between his teeth, he crawled towards the animal by such slow degrees as scarcely to move the grass.

Peering cautiously round the trunk of the huge tree, the lookers-on observed that the cow appeared a little uneasy. Once or twice she flapped her tail, and even turned her head round with a curious glance of her great eyes. Still she moved slowly onward, as cows generally do when grazing, scarcely ever standing quite still for more than half a minute.

Then it gave a great cry, as Andrew, rising to his feet close at its heels, and with a dexterity surprising in one who had long since deserted the sports of the field, gave the fatal touch with his knife to the main tendon of the hind leg. The beast was powerless, and without any difficulty Andrew drove his knife into the head of the spinal marrow, when the poor cow fell dead as if struck by lightning.

His companions now rushed forward and congratulated him warmly. Andrew replied with a mixture of pride and modesty becoming a successful hunter, and then bade them prepare a fire, while he got the elements of a supper, such as only a sailor who had visited foreign parts could have dreamed of.

He cut good-sized pieces of the flesh with the skin on it, but without any bone. He proceeded to initiate his companions into the mysteries of an old buccaneer dish, known as *carne con cuero*, or meat roasted with the skin on. The result proved to be as superior to ordinary roasting as venison is to mutton; and, as my father quaintly observed, "if any worthy alderman had supped with them that evening, *carne con cuero* would soon have become a celebrated dish in London."

While the others were preparing supper, my father had taken a stroll round about our camp, in the hope of making some fresh botanical discovery; and his keen eye was not long in detecting a plant about four feet high, the leaves of which seemed familiar to him. He pulled it up, and, as he expected, found that to the root were attached some small tubers of an oval shape, the largest of which were about two inches in diameter. *They were potatoes.*

Satisfied with these discoveries, the explorers started on their return next morning; for they were anxious to see how the village progressed. Determined, however, not to go back empty-handed, they loaded themselves with as much of the meat as they could carry.

Following the stream, they travelled in the direction of the lake, which was to the westward. In this, as in many other things, Andrew proved a good guide: but

though they hurried as much as possible, still they did not reach home that night; so they encamped once more, and gladly enjoyed another meal of cow beef.

At early dawn they were again on their way. In about two hours they were in sight of the village, where they were welcomed with all honours, and their tidings received with great rejoicing.

The negroes, under the guidance of Andrew, started to the spot where the tortoises had been left; but to their great mortification, they found that the larger of the two had succeeded in getting on his feet and escaping, after having gnawed the leather away.

For some days all hands were engaged in completing the huts, in fishing and in snaring birds; while the negresses scoured the woods in search of nuts, roots, or any other substance that would serve to vary the monotony of their diet.

A great deal had to be done to the huts ere they were habitable, according to Englishmen's ideas of comfort. They had hitherto lain on the floor; but though this did not appear to be any hardship to negroes, my relatives had more luxurious notions. Still they did not attempt to raise their couches more than a few inches from the floor, for the huts were low; besides, it is well known that the nearer the sleeper is to the ground the less will the exhalations of the human body affect his lungs.

In this way many days were pleasantly and agreeably spent, except for the constant anxiety they felt as to my fate.

But a few days after Pablina's arrival, my father, my uncle and the captain (now quite recovered), walked to the very summit of the rocks, whence they had an excellent view, and saw, at no great distance, a wreck floating at the mercy of the waves.

As the wreck was afloat, they believed there were many treasures on board, which to them would prove invaluable. But how to reach the ship was a mystery, until Captain John Thomas assured them he could make a raft that would carry them to it.

"All hands to the pumps," he cried, "the weather

holds good, and will for some days, I'll warrant. Let's go to work at once."

The jolly sailor's enthusiasm was contagious, and away they went to the village, to communicate the news. In ten minutes everybody was at work, tearing down trees and collecting anything that could be used in making a raft. They were then dragged to the seashore, where a huge, heavy and somewhat unwieldy fabric was made.

Those who started on the journey next day were my father, my uncle, the captain, Andrew and the negro boy Cudjie, which seemed as many as the raft would bear. They had contrived a mast and a coarse sail of cowskin, which, with two large oars, enabled them to reach the vessel in an hour.

As my father expected, it was a slaver. It was waterlogged, so that all hope of reaching the hidden treasures in the hold was out of the question. Still their visit was not without its results. The captain's cabin was a perfect armoury; and the powder magazine being watertight, they hoisted out every barrel, and found them undamaged. This was a delightful discovery, as it ensured a supply of game for the future.

Guns, pistols, swords and bayonets were in abundance. These were placed upon the raft with the utmost care. Then a second raft was improvised from spars, tubs, barrels and other pieces of wood—even the deck being broken up to make it solid. This was fastened together with some skill under the direction of the captain; who, moreover, though without any thought of their immediate use, insisted upon setting afloat, by the aid of empty airtight barrels and cork floats, eight very handsome brass carronades, which he found on deck.

The second raft was for the gunpowder, which it was determined to tow at a great distance. From the spars of the slaver they rigged a mast; they also contrived a sail, so that they might go ashore easily in the dusk of the evening, when the cool sea-breeze should set in upon the land. There were, no doubt, other treasures in the vessel, but the water had risen so high that it was dangerous to take off the hatches; so they were obliged to

be content with what they had, and with plundering the steward's pantry of a few knives and forks, plates and cups.

Then, as the moon rose in all its beauty over the calm waters, and a still, soft breeze stole over the rippling waves, they started, after observing with satisfaction that wind, waves and tide were carrying the heavy artillery towards the shore. The powder raft was towed a hundred feet behind; so that, despite every effort, it was many, many hours ere they were in reach of the shore.

At length, Andrew, leaping into the water, towed a line ashore to the head of a deep creek, where he made it fast.

Then, followed by my father and the rest of the party, they soon got the rafts into the creek and commenced unloading, being assisted by the negroes, and the women and children. The first task, before the heat of the day came on, was to carry the barrels of gunpowder into a safe place, which was found in the interior of the passage that led from the beach to the valley. About half-way along this passage a moderate-sized cavern was found, into which, by great exertions, the barrels were carried and safely lodged for fear of accidents; the entrance was barricaded, and an arrangement made that Andrew should be the distributor of powder.

Never was there seen a youth so wild with delight as he was at having a gun and a brace of pistols. To attempt to reason with him was useless. My father urged and entreated him to wait until the great heat of the day was past. But he was always wilful, and his companions soon heard the sound of his rapid shots in the woods;—then all was still.

Until late at night no alarm was felt; then, however, all began to have an instinctive dread of some evil having befallen him. A party was, therefore, at once organized to go in search of him, all being well armed and provided with torches.

They had not far to go;—scarcely a mile from the village they found what appeared to be his dead body.

They raised it up, but life was not extinct. He breathed heavily, though in a high fever, and my father at once pronounced him to be suffering from the effects of a sun-stroke.

He was carried home, treated as best they could, and did recover, after some days' devoted nursing on the part of Polly, who, though she had no sympathy with his ardent affection, was disposed to recognize his martial qualities and his many virtues.

It was remarked by all that, when he began to get about, there was a wild expression in his eyes that boded no good. They resolved, therefore, under the plea that it would be a long time ere he could bear fatigue, to deprive him of the use of fire-arms. He accepted the prohibition sullenly, but seemed satisfied to make up for it by manufacturing a rod, line and hooks, with which he occupied half his time, thus doing great service to the colony.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE ABDUCTION.

WITH a view to the approach of the rainy season, the roofs of the huts had been strengthened with additional boughs and thatch, and were slanted over the eaves. A ditch was also dug round the huts to carry off the water, for great care had been taken to examine the island, so as to find out the line of high-water mark in the rainy season; and it was discovered that all the huts had been erected above it.

Then a field was planted with wild potatoes, and a large supply of salted fish and beef laid in, together with every root and wild vegetable that was likely to act as an antidote to the scurvy.

A covered passage was also made from each hut to the refectory, so as to render exposure to the weather unnecessary.

Meanwhile, another change was taking place. A friendship of the most close and earnest character had sprung up between Polly and Pablina, even before either of them could utter one word that the other could understand. It was delightful to behold the patience and energy with which Polly set to work to teach the young girl. After they had completed the work of the day, which to them was light enough, they would retire to a little distance from the village, and there, seated on a log, the schooling commenced.

As long as the lessons were confined to the names of things, it was tolerably easy; but when they began to attempt the interchange of ideas, it was quite another thing. The notions of the girl were very scanty, but Polly was determined and firm in her resolve to teach; and in two months they could exchange short sentences with one another.

All this while they had a careful watcher in Andrew, who, now openly, now stealthily, would walk around, as if desirous to join in their studies. But the severe coldness of Polly interrupted him. There was in her anxious desire to teach the poor Indian girl a partly selfish motive, which she treasured in her own heart, and which, above all, she would not have him know.

Consequently Andrew grew more sullen every day, until one evening, with fire flashing in his eyes, he boldly addressed Polly, and asked her to be his wife. Polly firmly refused. She was engaged to another, and would never, never break her fealty. With a cry of rage and despair such as a demon might have uttered, he fled from the village of the lake.

When it was found that Andrew had absented himself, every other man on the island, well armed, started in search of him; but as to where he had gone they could not find the slightest trace;—he had vanished. It was a whole fortnight before the excitement settled down, but at last the inhabitants of Volcanic Island believed in his death. Then everything went on as usual, except that the old people spoke in whispers of the absent one. Polly and Pablina resumed their studies. The Indian

girl began to understand English. Why had she feigned to know nothing of it when she saw me first? Ah, me!

Polly and Pablina, like all the young of their sex, began to be merry and mirthful. The Indian girl already understood little sentences. "Now," said Polly, one day, "I am thirsty, fetch me water."

Away sped Pablina, laughing heartily, and in about five minutes she returned with a cup brimming full. But Polly was nowhere to be seen.

"No hide—no fun," said Pablina, "water spill."

But no answer came. In a moment the mug of water was placed upon the ground, and Pablina was rushing into every corner;—still no trace of the young girl. Wild with terror, Pablina darted off to the village.

Her signs and broken English were quite enough. In a moment, armed and unarmed, with and without the resinous torches of the great pine trees, of which there was an ample supply, some went one way, some another; some crept silently about, while others shrieked aloud.

Pablina was presently missed, which put the whole colony in an uproar. Traitors and serpents seemed to have entered Eden, at least so thought the dispirited and worn-out pursuers, when they returned after a fruitless search, kept up in the darkness until midnight.

Then, and then only, utterly exhausted, they gave up the futile and hopeless search, and endeavoured to gain comfort in sleep. It was grey dawn. All slept the slumber of the exhausted and the weary, when a loud cry, a cry that went to their very hearts, aroused them.

It was Pablina, standing before the huts, worn, exhausted and footsore. "Come," she cried, as soon as my father and my uncle appeared before her.

They needed no explanation. They knew that the heroic girl had not startled them from their slumbers without good reason, so they at once prepared to follow her. Captain Thomas was left in command, with strict injunctions to keep good watch.

Over hill, over dale, through valleys, through streams, she went, as the crow flies, without diverging to the right hand or to the left; and thus for hours she travel-

led on, guided by that unerring instinct that seems to belong to savage races. At length she halted and put her finger to her lips.

They were ascending a slope that seemed to end in an abrupt rock, and in a few minutes they were on the edge of a deep but narrow gully, through which rushed a swift stream of water, while on the other side was a small platform; then arose a very steep rock. The sides of the gully were covered by bushes, and a tree sloping upward appeared to connect the two sides. Pablina made a sign to them to halt, pointing at the same time to a fissure in the opposite rock. Then, with a firm and courageous step, she placed her feet on the tree and began to cross.

"Back!" cried a horrid voice; and a man clothed in the almost bleeding skin of a buffalo, with strange ornaments of boughs and tropical leaves, presented a pistol and fired—but without effect; for Polly had rushed from the cavern, and striking up Andrew's arm had saved Pablina's life.

The young man turned round upon her with such a look, that for a moment the others thought he was about to vent his rage upon her. During this time Pablina was crossing the tree. Polly stood face to face with the maniac, looking him full in the eyes. Like many a man in his unhappy state, this cool and collected exterior was enough. Still he was evidently not conquered, for, with a savage cry, he turned away as if to rid himself of her influence. As he did so, he found Pablina close to his shoulder.

The shock seemed too much for him. With a shriek of mingled despair and defiance he turned and leaped into the gulf below. They rushed forward to see what had become of him, perchance to save him; but the waters had closed over him, and his body, in all probability, had been carried away by the torrent.

Polly's energy and courage were now gone, and she had to be assisted across the gully by the men, who made a hand litter and bore her away. Several days passed ere she could bring herself to speak of the events that

had occurred during those twelve eventful hours, and when she did, it was with evident reluctance that she gave the following account of her captivity:—

When Pablina ran away to fetch the glass of water, Polly burst out laughing at such a practical proof of the progress the girl was making in English. This laugh was re-echoed close beside her, and turning round she saw Andrew in the act of putting out his hand to clasp her wrist.

His manner was alarming, while his appearance was dreadful. He had been wandering through the woods, subsisting on roots and berries for days, until he had torn his clothes to ribbons. With the instinct of a man brought up in a state of civilization, and who, moreover, had his lucid moments, he had contrived to provide himself with a savage kind of dress.

There he was, with the skin of a fresh-killed buffalo-cow clinging to him, while stuck in his belt were boughs of trees and tropical leaves fantastically arranged. His head-dress was of a similar character. In his hand was a huge club—a small tree, in fact, torn bodily from its abiding place, a pistol was stuck in his belt.

Polly knew that the man was mad, and having, as she thought, nothing to fear from his violence, she rose firmly and faced him.

“So you have come back,” she said, gently.

“I have,” he replied; “to fetch my bride.”

“Do I know her?” said Polly, gaily.

Andrew raised his eyes, uttered a dissatisfied growl, and, before she was aware of it, snatched her up in his arms and ran away at the top of his speed as if she had been a child, nor did he relax his pace until they were at such a distance as to render pursuit almost vain. None but Pablina thought of trying to track him by his foot marks.

It must have been a picture, indeed, to have seen the Indian girl following the marked and easily-found trail in the dark night by means of a torch. Probably but for this she would have come up with them, but the flickering of the resinous pine torch had warned the

cunning maniac, who made occasional détours to avoid her. It was in vain, however. Pablina, in the cause of friendship or of love, was a regular sleuth-hound, and though wearied from excitement and running, she never once lost the trail. In this way she tracked them to the cave by the gully.

Meanwhile, Andrew had been compelled to let Polly walk. To all her entreaties and prayers he replied only by menacing gestures. Whenever she asked him to turn back and join the friends who would be glad to see him, he answered by flourishing his club. He was evidently in one of his dangerous moods, nearly all madmen of his calibre taking it by fits and starts. Polly saw that the best way was to humour him, and, making no more resistance, she walked onwards until she came to the cave. She crossed the bridge and entered the fissure in the rock, for it was nothing more. A pile of grass in one corner, some dried meat and some bones, were all it contained.

Andrew had, however, collected a good supply of dry wood, and with it he made a fire at the entrance of the cavern, over which, when it had burned to embers, he cooked some buffalo beef and handed it to Polly. With the greatest composure she accepted the offer, and ate. Indeed she felt the necessity of keeping up her strength, as she knew not at what moment he might turn upon her.

But his manner soon became melancholy rather than ferocious. The fit was passing away, and presently all his savage tone subsided and he burst into tears.

"Polly," he said, sadly, "why am I driven out like a dog—why is it that I have had to bring you here by force?"

"You left us, Andrew, of your own accord. For days you were looked for, until at length it was believed that you had perished. Then we all mourned for you."

"Mourned for me! Did you mourn, Polly?"

"Certainly—no one regretted your misfortune more than myself."

"I sometimes believe," he said, in slow, measured

accents, while putting his hand to his forehead, "that I have been mad. But I am all right now, and shall remain so if you, Polly, will but love me and be my wife."

"You cannot," she replied, "expect me to give any answer to a man who confines me as a prisoner. It is neither reasonable nor just. I will give no answer until I am free."

"You are very cunning," he said, with a strange light again in his eye; "but I will think of it. You may now rest in peace; I will watch."

Then he went out upon the platform, nor did she see him any more until morning. How she passed the night she could scarcely describe, for though she fancied she slept, she was not sure. When he came in he gazed wildly at her, after which he again cooked some meat, and brought water in a broken horn, of which she made a breakfast. Suddenly he leaped to his feet, clutched his pistol and rushed into the open air. Polly followed him, and the rest has already been narrated.

CHAPTER LXIV.

BUFFALO HUNTING.

FROM this day strict injunctions were given to the girls to keep near the village and never to go out alone. This was scarcely necessary as far as Polly and Pablina were concerned, for they were more together than ever.

Soon after the occurrence above related, the two young girls, while wandering together in the woods, discovered the spring which I afterwards found, and there erected a bower, where they and my sisters went to work in the great heat of the day. They did not, however, devote themselves solely to sedentary employments, often wandering in the woods in search of fruits and flowers.

Ada, my youngest sister, on one of these occasions made a discovery, which it is surprising had not been

made before. She saw some curious things hanging from a tree, which on examination proved to be gourds, for all these islands and the whole continent, abound with them. They collected a number of the finest, with which they returned to the village, where they were heartily welcomed with their newly-discovered treasures. To the savages they are invaluable, as they use them to store their food and their drink in, as well as for cooking utensils. It was the great voyager Captain Cook, I believe, who explained how, when they wanted to dress food in one of these rinds, they would cut the fruit into two parts, and scooping out the inside, would then put water into one of the halves with whatever article of food they desired to dress. This done, a number of clean stones were made red hot in a contiguous fire, and thrown in one after another until the water was nearly boiling, and the meat was then fit to eat.

This, however, was an experiment too tedious for so busy a colony, all preferring to be satisfied with broiled and roasted meat while there was so much to be done on the island.

Shortly afterwards my father, my uncle, Captain John Thomas and two of the negroes started early one morning, armed to the teeth as if bent on a buffalo hunt; taking with them coarse baskets of withes, woven by the negroes, to carry the meat in. They were by this time pretty familiar with the haunts of these animals, so all their visits to the buffalo territory were made with great caution, as the bulls were very dangerous; and though fire-arms were generally very effective in checking them, yet my father had no desire to exercise any of that wanton destruction, which is fast exterminating the cattle of the Pampas and the buffaloes of the great American prairies.

Crossing the river, they crept stealthily through the wood, and after some little search they found exactly what they wanted. It was a bull, a cow and a very young calf.

This discovery having been made, the three white men and the two negroes arranged their plans. Now it

was absolutely necessary to sacrifice the bull; but in this instance it was the less objectionable as he was very young, and would serve for meat.

As the bull was at some distance from the cow and the calf, my uncle and the captain posted themselves so that each could aim at one shoulder of the bull, while the negroes and my father stood behind some bushes with coiled ropes in their hands. When all was ready they fired. The bull roared and bit the dust, while the cow, to their great astonishment, rushed towards him. This placed the negroes behind her, while my father suddenly appeared in front of her. She now paused in her career, but before she could recover herself and make any attempt to escape, a rope round her hind legs and one cast over each horn rendered it impossible.

While this was taking place the hunters had put the wounded bull out of his misery, so that they remained in full possession of both the cow and the calf. The cow was very difficult to manage, but the negroes soon remedied this by fastening her fore legs together and bending down her head by means of a rope fastened to the horn.

Then one of the negroes caught up the calf and carried it off in his powerful arms. The little animal at once set up a terrified bleating, and the cow, with a sympathetic low, made an effort to run after it. This, however, brought her to her knees. Having assisted her up, my father bade the negro go more slowly, and the cow was then able to follow.

Having gone about a mile, they halted at a stream, allowed the cow to drink, and gave liberty to the little calf, which was scarcely able to walk. It eagerly crept to its mother's side and sucked. The cow then appeared more resigned, and after considerable labour they succeeded in bringing her to the village, where she was received with loud shouts of triumph and rejoicing, especially from my mother.

The few tools which had been found on board the slaver—such as axes, swords and tomahawks—were divided among the men; for it was my father's intention to erect a log-hut for the cow.

By the joint hard work of all, even of the women and children, before night a very neat structure was set up.

Soon after the erection of the cow-house, the children began to hold quiet little conferences. The cow and calf were their delight; and when she found that they did not attempt to hurt the calf, she began to be very tame, so that after a time it became a regular practice to feed her from their hands.

But the great question which occupied the young people was as to the milking of the cow. Everybody wanted to be the first to attempt this rather serious operation, but after considerable discussion it turned out that no one knew anything practically about it, except my sister Ellen, and so it was arranged that she should be the milkmaid.

It was further determined by this little parliament that the whole affair should be juvenile, and that the parents and elders should not be admitted to the conference. They wanted to have the fun of a surprise, which might have been dangerous, if it had not been that the cow was so well fed as to have become gradually fond of its little providers.

Accordingly one morning when my father and the older members of the community rose, not a child was to be found. They had all vanished; even those who might be called young women having accompanied them. At first my father and mother thought they had gone to bathe, but then certain mysterious preparations which had been observed, recurred to my mother's mind, and enabled her to make a shrewd guess at the truth.

The children had sought out a very large bottle gourd, and having divided it they made two pails, with withes for handles. Then Ellen had manufactured for herself a hat of palm leaves, and fancifully adorned the poor remains of the dress in which she had been wrecked. Besides this, while the parents were out, the youngsters had caught the calf and tied it away from its mother.

The children were anxious, above all things, to be able some morning to present their mother with a bowl of hot milk, and for this purpose it was that they had

entered into the conspiracy to which we have already alluded.

Ere day broke they had sallied forth on what was indeed a most perilous adventure; for when they reached the enclosure, they found the cow in an almost frantic state, for want of being milked.

They halted and looked at one another. My sister, who had a rough sort of three-legged stool which the negroes had made for her, did not like the idea of giving up her venture; and at last, when the cow began to feed out of their hands through the bars of the gate, they boldly, or rather, recklessly entered the enclosure. No sooner had they done so than Polly and Pablina caught the cow by the horns and held her, while the children stood back, half amused, half terrified.

The cow was inclined to be violent, and would probably have disengaged herself from the grasp of the two girls, had it not been for the rapid action of Ellen, who popped down her three-legged stool, placed the pails at her feet and began to milk. The animal stood still, as if relieved, and, with a meekness truly wonderful, allowed the necessary operation to be performed.

It was at this moment that my father and mother arrived in some little alarm, and gently chided them all for attempting so dangerous an experiment; but the children replied by a shout, at the same time holding up the huge gourds of foaming milk, which they carried in procession to the village amid general applause.

The calf, having at once taken to green meat, was allowed only a small portion of milk and water, and after a short time it was permitted to return to its mother; which, however, scarcely seemed to notice its arrival, but appeared quite content to be milked twice a day by Ellen, and even submitted quietly to be led out to pasture by the children, with its knees hopped and a cord round one horn.

There was another undertaking in which all felt a considerable interest. The negroes had found some fibres suitable for making fishing nets, and one of them, being exceedingly skilful in such matters, had taught all the

others ; so that, before the rainy season set in, they were likely to have a net large enough to take sufficient fish for the whole party.

This was the last event of any consequence that took place before the rainy season, which came on very suddenly.

The wet season was very dull ; except, perhaps, to Polly and Pablina, who were never wearied of their conferences. They would retire to their small hut for lessons, and there pass whole hours in conversation. The others employed their leisure in making articles of furniture.

As soon as the rainy season was over, they again started to explore still further the interior of the island. Towards evening they reached the side of a long hill, where a cool sparkling rivulet leaped from rock to rock down into a lagoon below. Here five huge ebony trees lifted their crowned heads together in a little knot.

As it was resolved to pass the night in this spot, a fire was at once lighted, and some wild ducks which they had shot during the day were soon cooked. These, with some yams that were roasted at the same time, afforded them an excellent meal.

During supper none could help admiring the ebony tree, which is always met with along ridges or hills, but never on very low ground. It is one of the finest and most graceful trees of the African forest. Its leaves are long, sharp-pointed, dark green, and hang in clusters, producing a most grateful shade. Its bark is smooth and of a dark green. The trunk is also green, and rises straight to a considerable height, often fifty or sixty feet, and thence sends out large heavy branches.

Some of these trees have a diameter of five feet at the base. The mature ebony tree is always found hollow ; even its branches too are hollow. Next to the bark is a white sap-wood, which is not valuable. This, in an ordinary tree, is three or four inches thick, and next to it lies the ebony of commerce. The young trees are white or sappy to the centre ; and even when they attain a diameter of nearly two feet, the black part is streaked

with white. Trees less than three feet in diameter are not cut down.

That night they slept in tolerable comfort under the ebony trees, having first made fires to keep off noxious animals.

Next morning the three travellers, being resolved to explore somewhat further, moved in the direction of the lagoon; the banks of which, on this side, were like a lawn, so close had the grass been cropped by some animal. It was a charming place, and, but for its proximity to a crocodile lake, it would have been a delightful spot for a residence. As it was, a hunting and fishing box was proposed, and the idea pleasing all, the motion was carried unanimously.

About a mile and a half further down, the lagoon narrowed to a small stream, flowing over a bottom of pebbles. The water, too, was beautiful and clear, so that there was no difficulty in wading. As they now found themselves on the trail of the day before, they determined to make the best of their way home. On their arrival in the evening they found the camp in a fearful uproar.

Polly and Pablina were missing, and had not been seen all that day. There had been no noise during the previous night. The girls had lain down close to my mother; but when she rose in the morning they were gone, leaving no trace behind.

CHAPTER LXV.

THE HISTORY OF PABLINA.

No sooner had the camp fallen into that deep slumber which so naturally succeeds the fatigues of the day, than Polly and Pablina glided from beside the other sleepers, and stood in the open air. It was a calm and beautiful night, and the moon's soft rays fell upon the clearing with unusual brightness.

The girls spoke not a word, but acting as if by pre-

vious arrangement, they took a supply of provisions; then Polly raised a gun from the ground, and with cautious steps they glided across the plain, regardless of the many dangers that lay in their path. Their route was directly towards the village on the lake, which they reached about an hour before dawn. Still not a moment of rest did they seem inclined to take.

Drawing the canoe ashore, the two girls lifted it on their shoulders and made towards the mouth of the cavern that led to the sea, and through which they passed rapidly, as if fearful of pursuit.

Their whole conduct had a guilty air, and yet never were young women actuated by better motives. They were devoting themselves to a task of difficulty and danger—the one from the pure generosity of the female heart; the other from deep and devoted affection for her adopted sister.

Softly the dark sea waves came rolling on the shore, brightly sparkled the little billows under the cold, chaste moon, warm blew a little breath of air from the land, and all nature was grandly still at that hour, when deep sleep was upon the earth, and not even the marauding denizens of the woods were to be heard gambolling or crying one to another. Afar off, the billows rose and fell with a gentle undulation.

The canoe was placed upon the ground, and then set afloat in a small cove, into which the waves came slowly and softly. Pablina entered, while Polly handed her some little parcels of food, and then turned round to fetch the gun. As she did so, the Indian girl gave a sweep with her paddle, which sent the little frail skiff dancing out upon the surface of the waves. Polly shrieked, thinking at first that it was an accident.

But no sooner was the Indian girl a short distance from the shore, than she steadied her little barque, and spoke. “Pablina go alone—bring him safe or die!”

“Come back,” cried Polly; “we must go together, or neither of us shall go. You shall not thus madly risk your life for me!”

“Pablina go—good bye—back soon.”

And away the devoted girl paddled, in spite of Polly's frantic cries and supplications, which continued until her companion was out of sight. Then my cousin sank behind a boulder, insensible; nor did she recover until a storm roused her to consciousness, when she sheltered herself under a rock, watching the rising waves with a wild and sullen glance.

There could be no hope that a cockle-boat like that in which Pablina had departed could live in such a sea as was fast rising under the influence of the storm. Then in deep anguish she exclaimed, "Oh, Alfred! not only is the hope of your rejoining us now gone, but you, too, Pablina, will perish—a victim to my selfishness and your own devotion."

It was a fearful awakening from a long, fond dream, in which these two brave girls had indulged. It was the more terrible to Polly, because she had always intended to share the dangers of her faithful companion, and that dauntless girl had now departed alone on her mission. The squall lasted about half an hour. When it ceased, Polly strained her eyes along the whole horizon, in the desperate hope of making some discovery. She would have been thankful even to have known that all was over.

There she was, a picture of remorse and despair; her cheeks pale as death, her eyes streaming with tears, her hands clasped upon her knees, as, with the waves almost washing her feet, she sat gazing silently, hopelessly out upon that vast wilderness of tossing waters.

And thus it was they found her, faint and weary from want of food, and utterly unable to give any explanation of her own conduct, or that of Pablina. But next day when, with her head leaning on my mother's shoulder, she told her sad story, not one in that assembly could refrain from tears of sympathy.

As a necessary explanation of their perilous undertaking, Polly now gave her friends the following short account of Pablina's early history:—

"She came from a land underneath the sun, but no name by which she spoke of it represented any country

known in modern geography. It was, she said, a fertile land, with many horses, cows, oxen and even sheep, while the people dwelt in huts and tents, generally on the banks of rivers. They were a brave but not a warlike race, being fond of hunting, fishing and snaring animals, rather than of contests with their fellow men.

"They were utterly ignorant of the use of firearms. Their weapons were bows, arrows and clubs, while most of their hunting was done by snaring. They did much in the way of elephant and hippopotamus trapping, saving up the ivory for an annual trip down a large river; where, at a town which she pronounced Ndina, they trafficked them for necessities.

"Their lot did not seem an unhappy one, as their softness of character kept them from all those disgraceful cruelties, which generally appertain to the negro on the coast and in the interior of Africa.

"One day—whether the pirates had had ill-luck elsewhere, or had travelled further than usual—the village of which Pablina's father was chief, was surprised by an inroad of the Fan Indians, who, after killing some of the warriors and all the old people, carried off the rest into captivity. The marauders were in great numbers and had collected immense booty, which they drove before them like cattle.

"Many perished by the way from want of water and food, as well as from fatigue; but at length they came to a river, where a large number of canoes awaited them, and where food was in abundance. The able-bodied had still to walk, but the women and children were placed in the boats, and rowed forward amid beautiful scenery, which, if it did not cheer them, reminded the poor prisoners of home.

"Palms lined the river banks and the numerous tiny islands which studded its smooth and glass-like bosom, whilst the occasional deer which started away from the river side as the fleet of canoes swept past, the shrill cries of whole schools of monkeys who gazed at them with mingled astonishment and fear, the clear blue sky, and the magnificent solitude of those mighty forests,

which stretched back miles upon miles, and now and then a distant smoke curling through the trees and marking the site of a village, so reminded the captives of home that they wept bitterly.

"Their brutal captors only laughed and sang songs in a strange dialect, as if ridiculing their weakness.

"Then came, after many days, their arrival on the seashore and their sale to the white man, more cruel, more brutal, more debased even than their negro captors.

"Having sold their slaves, the Fans retired into the interior, and then the transfer to the ship commenced. It would be painful to record here the terrible story of the sufferings these wretched slaves endured on their short voyage; but a fearful tempest arose, which, driving them towards the land, continued for several days; at last, the seamen took to their boats and left the ship, imagining it was sinking.

"Then a large party of the negroes, aided by some black sailors belonging to the crew who had been left behind, made a huge raft, which took nearly all the slaves upon it.

"Those who were unable to leave the ship were left to their fate. The last remnant were chiefly women, and being attached to one another, they did their best to save each other's lives. Seeing the burning mountain, they knew that land was not far off, lashing one another to spurs they committed themselves to the waves.

"In this way was Pablina washed ashore. The others met with a very different fate."

As soon as Pablina and Polly could understand each other thoroughly, it came out in the course of conversation that there was a fertile wooded island to the northward, which at once roused in the young girl's bosom hopes that had never been entirely quenched. When they were wrecked, Polly had seen, as they were swept away in the gust of mist and rain, that there was an island at no great distance from the ship.

Polly confided her hopes and fears to Pablina. She was sadly afraid lest any attempt to enlist other sympathy in so hopeless an enterprise should only be the means of defeating her long-cherished purpose. Besides,

there was a kind of grandeur in doing it all herself, else a canoe or raft might have been constructed to transport several to the island.

But Pablina had great faith in her own powers. On the lakes and rivers of her native country—which, she said, had big seas, but not salt—she had crossed more than twenty miles, even in rough weather, and she was quite sure she could cross over, search the island, and return. But no sooner did she understand the fixed determination of Polly to accompany her, than she kept to herself the fact that the periagua would not contain more than one.

Her stratagem, it will be seen, was successful, and away she sped on her mission of gentleness and love.

For some hours her task was easy, and by keeping well out to sea she succeeded in avoiding the currents. In this way she reached the northern end of the island, and then paddled in an oblique direction towards what appeared a dark cloud in the distance. This she knew was her destined goal.

But presently the lowering sky, the distant thunder and the flashing lightning warned her of her danger. Yet she faltered not. She was determined to succeed or perish in the attempt.

Then down came the storm, at first not very violently, but soon so boisterous as to raise mighty waves. Still she urged on her little craft till the billows overtook her; then at one moment she was mounting the summit of the waves, the next, she appeared to be descending to the very depths of the ocean.

But her bold and gallant heart knew no fear. On, on she sped, as the rain fell and the thunder roared, as the lightning flashed and the wind blew, and everything indicated a fearful gale. At this moment, as if by magic, the waters became more still and the wind was unfelt. She had been swept by a current into smooth water under the lee of my island.

Then away she paddled with might and main towards the shore, which she at length reached by means of a river, and, utterly exhausted and fatigued by her perilous

and adventurous journey, she lay down to rest, after carefully concealing her canoe under some bushes.

She slept many hours, even until dawn; and when she awoke the sky was so blue, the sea so smooth, the wind so light, that she determined to attempt a tour of the island, in the hope of finding some trace—either a hut, or smoke, or some other sign of my existence.

Unfortunately she took the wrong way, and paddled along the shore towards the spot where the Fan village was afterwards temporarily erected. On this occasion, her eyes being intently fixed on the shore, she moved along so slowly that by evening she had only reached the mouth of another small stream, on the banks of which she saw, bathing, some of her friends and late companions on board the slaver.

Next minute almost, she was clasped in the arms of her father and mother.

Before, however, she could enter into any explanation as to her presence on that island, and in possession of a canoe, a number of Fan Indians came rushing down, with loud shouts and laughter; for these were the very men who had sold her and her friends into slavery.

The arrival of Pablina was a great triumph, as it was so utterly unexpected.

One of the young chiefs who came down to welcome her, in the ironical way which such brutal savages were likely to adopt, seemed, however, struck by her appearance. The life she had led with my friends had elevated her intellect. The mere study of a language will act upon the brain. Pablina looked glorious.

It has often been the fashion of writers to decry civilization, and praise up the virtues of a state of nature. Such persons know little of savages, who are in general cruel, brutal to women, tyrannical to children and utterly selfish, indulging in every form of vice and debauchery.

The one who looked so keenly at Pablina was a chief. Knowing the awful habits of these atrocious negroes, the poor girl at first fancied that her plump form, so different from the gaunt shape of her friends and relatives,

had attracted his notice, and that she was to be immediately sacrificed and eaten. She was right in one way; her graceful appearance had taken his fancy, but he did not want to eat her. He wished to make her one of his wives; polygamy being common, of course, with savages so demoralised.

When Pablina understood the object with which the chief was gazing at her so earnestly, she was no less alarmed than if he had intimated his intention of eating her for supper. She had an intuitive horror of these fearful cannibals, and her intercourse with my cousin had not tended to increase her desire to mate with a Fan negro. But she dissembled, and when the hunter brave paid her compliments, she feigned to receive them with modest diffidence, and thus gained time.

The hunters had been on the island for several days, and had considerable luck, but next day they moved more towards the interior of the island, when an idea struck the poor captive, of which she at once determined to avail herself.

In several places she observed footmarks, like those of her friends on the volcanic island, which were evidently made by something in the shape of a shoe.

This discovery once made, she felt that her journey had not been undertaken in vain. The youth about whom Polly was so anxious must be there.

The prisoners were not very securely guarded. The only canoes on the island were in the hands of the Fans and under the charge of sentinels, so that an escape into the woods was not likely to be of much avail. But Pablina had another belief. She had a somewhat exaggerated idea of the whites. If she could but communicate with me, her father, mother and other friends might be saved.

This thought it was that made her resolve on an escape. Pablina was indeed fleet of foot, else she could not have gone a hundred yards. As she started, sauntering on her way, the eye of a savage Fan sentry was on her, but he suspected nothing until the girl, having discovered the general direction of my trail, took to her heels. It

must have been exciting to see her bounding over the plain with a dozen or more yelping savages on her track, foremost of whom was the youth whose eyes had been captivated by her bright and pleasing countenance.

It was these cries that alarmed me, and enabled me to give the savages such a welcome as taught them to respect the power of fire-arms for some time to come. My feelings have been already fully explained, but those of Pablina were not easy to define. How difficult it was to analyze her feelings, may be judged from the fact that she did not reveal her knowledge of a smattering of my language.

I believe that my successful repulse of the Fans—my wholesale massacre of their warriors—had imbued her with an amount of respect for me approaching idolatry, while her mind was still full of the pitiful state in which her parents and relatives were placed. What made her abstain from communicating her intentions to me can scarcely be explained, except that she feared I would not allow her to attempt the rash task of rescuing her friends from such a horde of savages.

When Pablina and her friends were hurried into the boats by the terrified Fans, it was not noticed, in the confusion of their departure, that she was in her own canoe, and it was some time before they discovered that the current was taking them out of their course.

Pablina, however, who knew the currents well, succeeded in reaching the volcanic island without accident. The place where she landed contained splendid specimens of tropical vegetation and the scenery was of a very romantic character. A small river flowed into a bay, into which the tide swept with the flood, so that Pablina was, for a time, almost stationary. The shore, the mud island, the trees, which came nearly down to the water, were crowded with birds.

Fastening her boat, the brave girl cast one upward glance to heaven, and, totally unarmed, she entered the woods, which were not very dense, making for what appeared to be a clearing of some extent. Having crossed this clearing she came upon a stream, and after following

it for several miles she found she was at no great distance from the lake village. With a beating heart, that throbbed with varied emotions, Pablina followed the banks of the stream until the village was in view, and she could make out its inhabitants engaged in their usual avocations. It was evening, and all had come in. Some were cooking, some were searching the fish preserves, others were disposing of the captures of the day.

Seated by the fire, with a sad aspect, was Polly. For some days she had not been well. She bitterly reproached herself with having been the cause of the death of the Indian girl; and, from sheer fretting, she was wasting away.

Suddenly there arose a loud cry of triumph from the two boys. The camp was immediately in an uproar—a confusion like that of Babel ensued—and then the welcome fugitive was surrounded, fêted and made a perfect goddess of. But Polly soon induced them all to moderate their transports. Rising from her seat, she took Pablina's two hands in hers, and looked in her face.

"Well?" said she.

"Alfred lives," replied the Indian girl.

Polly turned to the astonished group with a look of heavenly triumph, which none of them ever forgot. Now was the time for Pablina to be overwhelmed with questions; but as Polly was the only one who could thoroughly comprehend her, it was arranged that she should hear the story first, and then relate it to the others.

Pablina had considerable difficulty in explaining to Polly how it was that she had not revealed everything fully to me; but the Indian girl declared, with touching simplicity, that she had been so terrified at all that had happened, and so bewildered by the desire to save her parents, that she firmly believed terror had tied her tongue.

Polly was at last satisfied with this explanation, and then showered upon Pablina a multitude of questions relative to my appearance, health and comforts.

When, after supper, the happy dwellers in that secluded

village heard all the wonders which had befallen me, the delight, gratitude and joy of the whole party may be better conceived than described.

There was but one opinion. They were all too impatient to undergo the delay of building a canoe, and agreed that for such a journey as that contemplated a raft would be sufficient.

In the first place, it was decided to build it at the mouth of the river where Pablina had fortunately found a port. This necessitated a great supply of provisions, and a migration of the whole party to the sea-shore, as neither women nor children would hear of being left behind.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE JOURNEY.

JERKED meat, salt fish and dried birds having been provided, the whole colony started for the opposite coast, where they hoped to be able to open up a communication with my island.

About noon they halted under the grateful shade of a clump of palm trees—for members of their family, very ugly ones. Their stems were very large, and were thicker in the middle than at the base or top. But they excited no more notice than that their shade was very grateful, until they all remarked that Pablina was examining them with considerable attention.

“What is it?” said my father.

“Cut one down—see!” replied Pablina.

As the Indian girl generally had a very good reason for all she did, there was no hesitation in obeying her directions. Amid a shout of delight from the children, the tree fell. Then Pablina caught up a small axe and chopped off the crown of leaves from the top.

These trees are cut down at certain periods, and as soon as the crown of leaves is cut off the sap begins to flow from the upper end, and continues to flow for some months. It is, however, necessary that a thin slice should

be shaved off from that end every morning, so as to expose a fresh surface.

A good tree has been known to give ninety gallons, and all this must have been contained in the vessels of the apparently dry trunk. It is asserted that the sap flows much more quickly on those days when the sun is powerful, and likewise, that it is absolutely necessary to take care in cutting down the tree, that it should fall with its head upward on the side of the hill, which had been done by Pablina's directions. They found her to be quite right, although one would have thought that the action would have been aided instead of checked by the force of gravity. The juice is chiefly used after boiling, when it becomes a kind of treacle, but it is very pleasant when fresh.

After dinner they again started, journeying slowly, examining every object of interest, and noting down such places as they thought worthy of future examination. At last they reached the sea, and halted on the banks of the river where Pablina had arrived on her escape from my own island.

Hasty huts were at once erected, while my father and uncle searched the woods for such trees as might be suitable for the formation of a raft.

Everybody worked with a will, for they were all desirous to reach my island. It must be recollected that the space between the two islands was as great as that between England and France, or nearly so, and therefore the construction of a raft was of itself of great importance. The mouth of the river was very wide; still, a spot was readily found, a kind of cove in the river's bank, where the frame of the raft could be built.

No adventures of any consequence happened until the raft was completed, when my father, my uncle, the captain and one negro started on their voyage. All the family stood on the shore, some with eyes streaming with tears at the prospect of the perils the voyagers would have to undergo, while every heart beat high with the hope that they might find me safe and sound upon my deserted shores.

The morning was very hot, and this should have made them hesitate to start, for in those seas the most sultry days are often squally. But the bold mariners sped on their way, and were soon lost to view as they turned the point of a promontory.

Working steadily at their oars, and assisted by the sail which counteracted the current, they headed directly for my island. Of course with such an unwieldy machine their progress was slow,—not more than a mile and a half an hour. A raft is always difficult to manage, and in this instance, being unusually strongly built, it was the more awkward. Luckily the skipper was a first-rate seaman, and as all obeyed his orders and tried to emulate his ability, everything in their power was done to accelerate their progress. At length the wind ceased and the raft advanced solely by the use of the oars.

“Humph!” said the skipper, “I don’t like this. It’s a shift of wind. That sail must come down, and we must work with a will before a squall catches us.”

They were now about three miles from their own island; while mine was like a cloud in the distance. The old skipper shook his head.

A squall was evidently overtaking them. In half an hour more the wind was upon them, the raft was nearly submerged, while everybody was wet to the skin; and night fell before they could discover where they were.

After being tossed about for several hours at the mercy of the waves, they were startled by a shock. They had been carried away by the current and cast upon an atoll or lagoon island, the work of that wondrous thing the coral insect. These islands are mere circular reefs, surmounted here and there with islets, on which grow some cocoa-nuts, that serve to nourish a kind of huge land crab.

The sea was now as calm as the day before it had been turbulent; but they soon discovered that, despite their oars, despite all the steering abilities of the captain, the raft would make towards the volcanic mountains. In these seas there are currents governed by causes not easily explained. They are influenced by the winds and

tides; also, no doubt, by the subterranean fires, which sometimes end in volcanic eruptions.

At length they saw that, under present circumstances, any attempt to reach my island was totally out of the question. The current was steady, and every effort to get out of it only resulted in their being, when just on the edge, whirled round and sent backwards. At length, with a deep sigh, they made for their volcanic island, and then found that all difficulty as to their progress ceased.

Meanwhile the colony had been in a state of the most alarming suspense, for though their friends on the raft had departed with bright prospects, they had not gone far ere the howling tempest overtook them.

The white women retired to their huts to pray for those at sea, the negroes to talk of the dangers which menaced their friends, and to whisper of dark signs which always occur to credulous and half-cultivated minds in days of danger and difficulty. At early morn all set about their ordinary occupations in solemn silence, for their hearts were too full to speak.

My cousin, my eldest sister and Pablina had been charged with the defence of the colony, and, at the same time, with hunting after game. It was my father's wish that they should learn the use of fire-arms; and as powder was tolerably plentiful, they were allowed to practice every day. With quick eyes and fearless hearts they soon became excellent shots, and, when all together, they would venture to attack even a panther.

Still they were not fool-hardy; and Polly, who was the best shot and also the eldest of the party, carried her gun loaded with ball. One day, however, when out hunting, they had not for some hours met with anything worth wasting a shot upon; at length, still keeping the banks of the river in sight, they came to a spot where some trees rose to an immense height, almost without a bough. They gazed at them with perfect awe, even sitting down to enjoy a full sight of them. After a little search Pablina found some figs here, which she began eating, and handed some to her friends, who, following her example, enjoyed the delicious fruit.

"There would be a bower of bliss," said Polly, pointing thoughtfully to the wide-spreading branches.

"Rather difficult to climb," replied my sister, "but poor Alfred used to tell me of persons who had made their homes in such places."

Polly rose and turned away towards the river, her eyes suffused with tears. She was a little in advance of the others. Suddenly a strange noise startled her. She looked round—there was Andrew kneeling before her, nearly naked, though tanned and hairy, his hands clasped together in an attitude of supplication, the tears streaming from his eyes; his whole aspect forlorn, miserable and broken-hearted.

He was quite calm now. Fever and illness had done their work. For some time he had been unable even to walk, crawling about the forests in search of berries, which, with water from the pools, formed his whole sustenance. With this prostration of his physical powers, the madness which had affected him had passed away. He was, at the same time, perfectly conscious of the past, and felt deep regret for all that had occurred.

"I am ill—very ill," he said, humbly.

"Can this be Andrew?" cried Polly. "Do get up and come with us."

He rose, assisted by Polly, and sat down under a tree.

His story was a terrible one, and I wish I had space for it here. Suffice that the narrative of his sufferings brought tears into their eyes. When he was a little restored by means of both food and drink, he rose and offered to accompany them home.

At this moment the sound of footsteps was heard in the forest, and before the girls could put themselves into an attitude of defence, they were surrounded by the return party—without me, as Polly saw at a glance, and fainted; for she thought they had visited my island with a fatal result.

However, there was nothing for it but to return home and adjourn any further attempt for the present, as the rainy season was coming on, and it was necessary to regain with all speed the village which had been erected

on the islands of the lake. It must not be thought that they had any intention of abandoning me to my fate; on the contrary, they were more determined than ever, but they had lost all faith in a raft, and resolved to build a boat or small ship, capable of bearing the whole party; and so, full of hope and trust in the future, they went into winter quarters.

At last the rain began to fall less continuously, and now and then, as my friends sat in the mouth of the birds'-nest cave, they saw strange lights in the heavens.

Presently all started to their feet for, about three miles out to sea, they observed a great wave come pouring in as if to overwhelm and destroy the whole island. On it came with a smooth outline until, in fearful breakers, it dashed upon the shore, and next minute it was whirling rocks, boulders and large trees about, as if they had been straw and feathers. Then came another and another, and at the same time the earth rocked, and my friends were cast to the ground, and nearly choked with rubbish and dust.

Then from the upper part of the lake there came an explosion, and a great column of smoke arose—the water appeared to be boiling, and becoming black, it exhaled a most disagreeable sulphureous smell. All thought their last hour had come, for they were evidently on the very top of a volcano, which might at any time overflow and utterly destroy the little colony.

As soon as my father could exercise his authority, he led the whole party to an elevated plateau. Then they saw that the volcano was at work. Flames from its summit and a vast column of smoke, rose to the heavens, while showers of cinders fell near the spot where they stood. What with the roar of the burning mountain, the moaning of the earth beneath, and every now and then another smart shock, the scene was desolate and terrible indeed.

In the evening the huge column, which had been black during the day, became quite lurid; while everywhere masses of lava, in a liquid state, were shot through the air to fall in a spiral or pear shape to the ground—solid.

There were several shocks of earthquake before midnight, though not so violent as the first; but they were accompanied by rain, which soaked my friends to the skin. The misery they suffered that night, both mental and physical, was appalling. There is nothing which so utterly prostrates the human mind as a sense of weakness—and what else can it feel in the presence of such a calamity as that with which they had to contend?

Just before dawn there was a severe shock. It came on very suddenly, and lasted about two minutes. The rocking of the ground was clearly discernible, while the undulations appeared to come from due east. There was no difficulty in standing upright, but the motion made them giddy, being something like the movement of a vessel in a cross ripple, or rather what one feels when skating over thin ice which yields to the weight of the body. The general sensation, however, was one of strange insecurity.

But when day came they saw how terrible had been the shock. Looking down towards the sea, they observed lying high up on the beach, huge masses of rock, which, from the productions adhering to them, must have been upheaved from deep waters. The ground was fissured in many places.

A consultation was held by the male whites of the party, but it was very brief. They resolved, at any peril, to cross over to the mainland, whence they hoped to be able to communicate with me.

All the arms and ammunition, every scrap of food and other necessities, were hastily collected together, and then the whole party made for the sea-shore on the opposite side of the island.

The channel was six miles wide, and evidently the current was swift. A clumsy but substantial raft was made after a whole day's work—a raft not only capable of bearing them all, but of carrying the cow. After a hearty meal, the night being clear and the moon bright, they started. Long poles had been cut for oars, but, to their great delight, they found that they were able to pole the raft. Whether they had accidentally hit upon a

ford, or whether the earthquake had raised the bed of the sea, they could not say; but the poles touched the bottom the whole way across.

Before midnight, they were returning thanks to heaven on the shores of that mighty continent which is still a mystery to the inquirer and the traveller.

The spot where they landed was desolate near the water, but they discovered close behind them a beautiful valley, full of trees and fruits. They built their huts on the shore, as more likely to attract my attention, and from an anxious desire to be within reach of that sea by which alone they could hope to escape.

When morning broke, all set eagerly to work to establish themselves in this village, though it was disheartening to have to begin the world afresh. But ere a week, their huts presented a cheerful and pleasant aspect.

There was abundance of game in the valleys and forests behind the hills, while the sea afforded fish in great quantities. Much time was spent in hunting, in order to leave the colony well supplied with food during the period of the excursion which had been decided upon in search of my humble self. Then occurred my visit to the volcanic island, and the discovery of my friends on the shores of the mainland; after which the impatience of the whole party could not be restrained.

My father, my uncle and Captain John Thomas started, as has been already explained, leaving Andrew in command of the colony.

When my friends reached that part of the coast which was nearest to my island, they made a discovery that not only explained the character and size of the animals that frequented my territory, but accounted also for the frequent visits of the savages. The tide being unusually low, there was a ford all the way across. This is the way in which elephants and such-like animals reach Ceylon from the continent, the space to be crossed being very many miles.

The delight experienced by my friends at finding me, I need not further dwell upon.

CHAPTER LXVII.

OUR FAMILY MEETING.

As soon as the wet season was over, my father, my uncle, Captain John Thomas and myself hastened to complete our arrangements for starting to the mainland to bring over the rest of the family. We took with us my zebra and horse and four dogs, the former laden with such provisions as were likely to be most welcome and suitable to my friends. We journeyed directly towards that part of the sea which was fordable at low tides, and reached the spot towards evening, but the tide was up, and we were obliged to halt. Gradually, however, it subsided ; a reef appeared here, a rock there, until the wide expanse between the island and the mainland was dry, except in scattered pools.

There was no time to be lost, as we intended sleeping on the continent that night, and it was with a sense of mingled delight and anxiety that I hastened on my way.

The grey dawn was peering forth from above the hills, when, after a long and winding journey in the sand, into which we often sank up to our knees, we reached the shore. I would have pushed on, but they were all too much fatigued, while there burned not in their veins that fire which impelled me always to quick and vigorous action. For some hours, then, we halted, and after sleep and refreshment, we again started on our journey.

Presently we came within sight of the palm trees that overhung the village where dwelt all those we loved in the world. A column of smoke curled gracefully over the summit of the waving leaves, at sight of which, denoting as it did peace and tranquillity, my head became dizzy, and I almost tottered.

It was now agreed that the captain should go before us, to prepare them for our arrival, lest the great joy might overcome them—not that joy kills, but that it sometimes injures temporarily.

Away he galloped upon the zebra, pleased with his

mission. We followed at a rapid pace, and after going a mile farther, we had the satisfaction of seeing the whole party come forth in tumultuous haste upon a kind of grassy lawn to meet us. We were not a hundred yards apart. With a bound I rushed into their midst, caught Polly in my arms, kissed her wildly, and then turned to embrace everybody. It was a mad and wild sight. We were nearly frantic. To speak was impossible.

But who is this who stands apart with folded arms beneath a tree?—It is Pablina!

I sprang forward, immediately, to draw her towards the group and embrace her too. "But for this girl," I cried "I should never have lived to see you."

And then I took her hand and Polly's, and leading them towards the shade of the trees, all thought of work for that day was put off, and a great feast organised. Never was such a happy day seen before. Everybody was wild with joy. The sparkle of delight in Polly's eye I was never tired of watching.

Remember that I had been a lonely prisoner for six years, and only during six weeks had I ever enjoyed the society of women. About ten o'clock the children and females were all sent to bed, after which the elders, including my mother, held council. There was but one opinion, and that was, instant removal to my island. It was agreed that the march should be begun early the next day, the whole party halting during the great heat.

Then thus began my father.

"Alfred, you love your cousin Polly?"

"I do," said I, blushing crimson.

"In a primitive state of existence like ours," continued my father, "we must depart from those rules which govern civilized states of older growth. Marriage was instituted for the protection of society, and the form is necessary, in an advanced age, to make it binding and to protect the woman. But where we have no laws and no legal ministers, we must make laws for ourselves. Captain Thomas, you have often read the burial service?"

"Often, sir," he replied, with a grim smile.

"Then one month from this day, when the young

couple have got themselves a house, you shall read the marriage service, and the marriage shall, under the circumstances, be as valid as if performed by a bishop."

I pressed my father's hand, and wept for joy. It was too much happiness. I could scarcely believe it.

With a view to prepare for the next day, all retired, though I crept into the palm grove, where, seated under the shade of a spreading tree, Polly awaited me. And there, under a glorious tropical sky, with the stars shining down upon us, with the gentle moon sailing across the heavens, I told the story of my love, and won her dear consent to be my wife.

With true womanly feeling she would have preferred the sanction of the Church; but when I explained the nature of my father's statement, and assured her that to live without her was impossible, she yielded and was mine.

"But how have you done without me all this time?" she said, archly.

"I have hoped. Nothing has supported me but first the hope, and then the certainty that you were alive."

"Flatterer!" she said; and as the grey dawn came up in the eastern sky we parted, not to seek rest, but to rouse the negroes and prepare breakfast.

We kept apart that morning. Our happiness was too great for words, and we should have betrayed ourselves had we not bustled about. There was one beautiful but sad eye which seemed as if it had not slept, and which, dear to me as a darling sister, I could not bear to look upon. But she, too, bustled about and made herself useful, looked after the children, helped to load the animals, and, when the word was given to march, took two little ones by the hand and led them forth.

I led the way with my gun on my shoulder. I was universally recognised as chief, while my elders were my prime ministers. By my side walked Polly, and next came my mother, mounted on the zebra, which no one could sufficiently admire.

The mid-day rest was taken under some steep rocks, which sheltered us from the noonday sun. Four hours

renovated both man and beast; and by a good march in the cool of the evening, the spot was reached whence we were to take our departure for the island.

They could see it even in the dull light; and such was the eagerness of all, that they would gladly have done without rest to have gone over at once. But the elders objected, as the tide was beginning to rise. When it subsided we crossed over without accident; and it was past the meridian when I guided them to the bay where I had seen Pablina escape from the Fan Indians. I resolved to lead them at once to our new residence, taking my island home on our way.

All were in ecstasies of delight at the beauty, loveliness and fertility of my island, where, but for savages, even my mother fancied she could consent to live, at all events for some years. She wished to lay her bones in the old churchyard at home—as many have often wished before, and will again—in vain.

That evening we halted in the beautiful flowery prairie which I have already described. It was suitable in every particular for a camp, having wood, a clearing and water. Many said this should have been our permanent location, but I bade them wait until they had visited every part of the island, when they might judge as to the wisdom of my choice. The children were in raptures, and as soon as it was dusk they were paddling in the water like porpoises.

All this time I had scarcely seen anything of Andrew. We had shaken hands, but on his part there was no cordiality, which, knowing the circumstances, I easily forgave. He kept aloof from us all and avoided speaking. It seemed to me that he was doing his utmost to conquer his feelings and found the task a difficult one. We were seated at supper. Polly was by my side, sprightly and gay. We had agreed to have a stroll, so after supper we rose to make our way into the forest.

Andrew rose also.

"May I have a word with you?" said he, quietly.

"Certainly," I replied, walking aside.

"It is agreed," he began, "that you are to have the

sole control of an island which you may be said to have discovered, and I, for one, am willing to accede to the idea."

"Not if it makes you uncomfortable."

"Not at all; it is quite right. But I wish to say that during my late illness I acquired habits of solitude, and if you have no objection I should like to locate myself here. Give me some seeds and anything you can spare, and I will try what I can do alone and unaided."

"If it be your wish, Andrew."

"It is. I desire to have an object in view, and what better one can I have than that of making myself a home? I will come and see you, and you can come and see me if you wish. But I will carve out my own fortune."

"You shall. It is a manly wish and shall be acceded to. I will show you all I have done. We shall have quite an extensive population soon."

He made no answer, but wrung my hand and went his way. I began to be a little elated. I had for years been monarch of all I surveyed, but then I had no subjects except the animals I had subjected to my sway. Now I had not only subjects, white and black, but I was about to have towns in my dominions.

I felt deeply for Andrew, for I had peculiarly strong feelings in matters of love, and could not but pity him.

I rejoined Polly, and we had a long conversation about him, in which she expressed her pity for the young man in very moving terms. I changed the subject and spoke of ourselves, and of that bright and happy future we had a right to expect. But how many have expected in the same way, only to be bitterly disappointed.

Next day we reached my lake. We mended and enlarged the raft, crossed over to my island and visited my bower. All were in ecstasies.

The bower had been damaged in my absence. Polly wanted to remain and repair it now, but I gently insisted on our duties to the rest of the colony, which imperatively demanded that we should finally complete and fortify our settlement.

"We shall come here and spend the honeymoon," I whispered.

She blushed, laughed and yielded.

That evening we began our march to the village of the great trees, which next night we reached, without further damage or adventure—when one and all came to the decision that we had selected the right spot.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

THE settlement we had selected under the great trees was in every respect an unexceptionable one. We were tolerably well supplied with fire-arms, and powder was as yet plentiful; but if we were discovered by a large body of savages, who had been accustomed to white men, they might sufficiently disregard our weapons to make a fearful and sudden onslaught, when, after discharging our guns, we should be comparatively helpless.

Several plans of fortification were suggested in solemn council, but one was at last hit upon which I think was the best that could have been devised. A sufficient space to surround our village was staked out, the stakes chosen being of such trees as were likely to take root. Within these were planted a number of dwarf and prickly palms; while without, prickly pears, a plant that abounded at no great distance, were stuck into the ground in such a way as necessarily, if allowed to grow, would make a fortification impenetrable to naked savages.

But this was only the redoubt. Now remained the fort.

I had remarked that two of the huge trees—ninety feet before they had any branches, and at least thirty feet in circumference—were exactly the same size, and stood about twelve feet apart. Now this attracted my attention all the while the stockade was being made; and my course of proceeding, after consultation with my ministers, was as follows:—

A number of strong trunks of trees were cut down, while the negroes went out with the cattle in search of bamboos. These were made into ladders about twelve feet long. Then, at the height of twelve feet, holes were bored into each tree sufficiently deep to receive the ends of the sturdy poles already prepared. Sufficient of these being placed across, a flooring of bamboo was made, with a parapet four feet high. Another ladder was then placed against the tree, and at twelve feet above the first, another flooring was made, and so on till the very summit of the tree was gained. By cutting branches away, and combining art with nature, a splendid platform was now constructed, on which every member of the colony could have taken refuge; while, to our great delight, it also gave us a fine view of the sea.

We decided to call this Look-out Castle, and further determined to erect upon it a flag-staff, on which a kind of signal could be hoisted, in the faint hope of its being some day seen by a passing ship.

It must not be supposed that we devoted all our time to this task. The day was divided into two parts, one of which was given to the general good of the colony, the other to individual interests. In this way huts were improved, animals were captured, fish taken, and all the details of every-day life carried out.

The house which Polly and I were to inhabit was situated on a slope at the back of the trees, quite away from the general habitations. It was to be a one-story house with two rooms, and a sloping roof sufficiently high to contain stores. The workmen consisted of myself, my younger brothers and Cudjie; and never had master more willing assistants. There would we adjourn after our mid-day meal, and, with a goodly supply of materials, go to work.

At last the morning broke on which Polly was to become mine by the dearest of ties. It was a bright and glorious day. I had risen at dawn to make the final preparations. On a small hillock within the fortifications we had erected a kind of chapel with an altar. It was merely four upright bamboos supporting a roof, but to us it appeared a marvel of architecture.

All had arrayed themselves in their best, while such happy grinning faces as the negroes presented, all shining with recent washing, it would have been hard to find. There is nobody for marriages, christenings, or funerals like the blacks. Every one had some present for the bride and bridegroom, besides having devoted much time to the perfection of my master-piece, which was to dazzle the eyes of the bride.

Soon after breakfast we formed in procession and moved in the direction of the altar, where the old captain with a prayer-book in his hand awaited us. All were as grave, solemn and sensible of the importance of the occasion, as if we had been in a stone church, duly consecrated.

Polly was surrounded by the women. I had all the males of our happy colony around me; and Andrew, who had by this time laid aside all jealousy, became my right-hand man. I even thought I saw him cast longing eyes at my sister Ellen.

The captain said a few words. The service then began, and at the termination of a quarter of an hour we were man and wife. It had been arranged that games such as archery, running, leaping and wrestling should follow, until the sumptuous meal, which had cost the negroes a sleepless night, was ready.

The elders took their seats, and beside them sat my wife—how it sounded. It would have been ungracious on my part to have abandoned my younger friends and to remain seated, so I became the most jovial of the band. All were full of spirits, and when I proposed a dance—because the girls could join—the mirth was uproarious.

The banquet was spread upon the green under the shade of the trees. I need scarcely say that there were toasts and speeches, and laughter and tears, for such is the everlasting result of weddings in all countries.

Then appeared, amidst thunders of applause, my sledge, to which was attached the zebra and her foal. It was a splendid affair. It had been made in secret, and excited general delight. Polly took her seat, I

joined her, and then—but why linger to tell all they said. Everybody will readily guess what passed.

But of the joy, of the delight with which we wandered through my island bower, I could tell tales that would make me appear garrulous. Suffice it to say that they live on my memory now, and cause me to look back with joy inexpressible to the hour that made Polly my dear wife.

At the end of a week we received a visit from the whole colony, who came in state, except Andrew and my sister Ellen. They had gone to the grassy farm by the lake to spend their honeymoon. For months they had been secretly affianced.

At the end of another week we returned to the settlement, and after a few days devoted to urgent duties, we sent an express to invite the newly-married couple to a banquet, and in honour of their arrival we prepared a novel reception.

To the flag-staff on the summit of the great fig-trees we attached a flag, which I had saved from the wreck. When the young couple came in sight we fired a perfect salvo.

I need scarcely say with what delight we noticed that Andrew was not only quite recovered, but happy.

We had all, therefore, reason to be thankful, and with a hopeful dependence on Providence we looked forward to the future with deep satisfaction. We were a little nation in ourselves, all our wants were amply supplied; and now that there were marriages on my island, I had every reason to expect that a colony might soon arise, which would be heard of in time in the outer world.

But man lays down his plans, and the breath of a single night disarranges them all. Three days after the festivities on the occasion of Andrew's visit, after a day of great heat, that made all languid and idle, the sky became overclouded, and a sound as of myriad fairy footsteps in the tree-tops was heard, followed by a low, tremulous moan. It was the wind. All could see that a storm was brewing, and preparations were made accordingly.

An hour later we were all safely housed in my residence. Supper was laid out, and as the gale appeared to

increase every moment in violence, all determined to abide where they were.

About an hour before daylight there was a lull in the gale, and then there came a sound which made the heart leap to the mouth of every one present—it was a gun at sea. Some ship, caught in the storm, was in distress.

Not a word was spoken, but all rushed into the open air and made for the shore, which we reached just as another gun startled the echoes of the night. With one accord, a whispered order from my father being backed by one from my uncle, all began to cut trees, brushwood, anything in fact that would burn, which materials being hurriedly piled up and fired, there soon blazed such a beacon as could not fail to be seen from a very considerable distance. We then fired three platoon volleys, which in about five minutes were answered by three guns one after another.

To describe our ecstasies would require a pen I cannot command. Only a few hours before, we were all content to spend the remainder of our days upon my island, but now at the bare idea of escape all seemed to have gone mad. We danced in a circle round the fire, we jumped, we screamed, we embraced one another; and thus the hours passed until daybreak came, when, as the grey light fell upon the subsiding waters, we saw at anchor, not a mile from the shore, a tall-masted barque, from which a boat was pulling swiftly towards the land.

It would be hard to say whether we were most delighted, or they most astonished to see such a group run down to the beach. The barque was the "Walter Raleigh," of London, bound for Virginia, short-handed and out of water and provisions. The storm had been very severe, and at one time, while in fear of foundering, they had in despair fired their guns.

A bargain was soon struck. We agreed to find them in all needful provisions, salt, fresh and dried; to supply water, and anything in fact they required, on condition that they would take us as passengers—all save Andrew, his wife, and Jack my youngest brother, who determined to remain on the island; only exacting a promise that I

should visit them once or twice and communicate by passing ships. Though surprised, I readily agreed, and a week later we embarked, but at the last moment I was utterly astounded by the defection of Pablina, though Polly said she suspected the cause.

Three months later we took possession of my uncle's estates in Virginia, to the astonishment of the heir-at-law; and it is in sight of his luxurious mansion that I write this narrative of the most wondrous period of my life. I have now been in America three years;—my son is two years old, my daughter nearly one. I am happy; but there is still a strange yearning for my island home, and if I can coax my wife into compliance, I shall shortly visit it again, and may, ere long, report its further progress to the world.

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